CONSOLIDATION OF SOUTHERN SUNG CHINA UNDER HSIAO-TSUNG'S REIGN, 1162-1189

by

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ABSTRACT

This is a study on the reign of Hsiao-tsung, the second emperor of the Southern Sung dynasty (1127-1279). His rule from 1162 to 1189 represents a crucial phase in Southern Sung history for it was during this period that the regime was greatly strengthened and the empire solidly built. By effectively consolidating the Southern Sung regime further, Hsiao-tsung not only succeeded in establishing an age of peace and order under his administration but also constructed a dynasty of long duration which successfully resisted foreign penetration for almost another century after his reign.

The thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter One, the Introduction, gives the historical setting and places the reign of Hsiao-tsung in a clearer perspective by highlighting the major political, socio-economic and military developments of the time. Chapter Two provides an account on the founding of Southern Sung. The political upheavals during the reign of the first emperor, Kao-tsung, represent a sharp contrast to the overall peaceful administration of his successor. Chapter Three deals with the early years of uncertainty during Hsiao-tsung's reign and gives us a better understanding of the tasks initially confronting the emperor.

In Chapters Four and Five, the significant role played by Hsiao-tsung in consolidating the Southern Sung empire is analysed through a detailed study of court politics during the

Ch'ien-tao (1165-1173) and Ch'un-hsi (1174-1189) eras. It can be deduced that the emperor achieved consolidation by concentrating political, military and financial powers not only in the central government but also in his own hands. As a result, absolutism attained a new height, but this was not necessarily harmful as it had the positive effect of bringing about general order to the regime.

Finally, in the Conclusion in Chapter Six, we examine the far-reaching impact of Hsiao-tsung's contributions to Southern Sung China. His labours resulted in a lasting stability that held the empire together through the years of political decline and economic deterioration. The remarkable resilience demonstrated by the late Southern Sung dynasty undoubtedly attests the strength of Hsiao-tsung's consolidation.

CONTENTS

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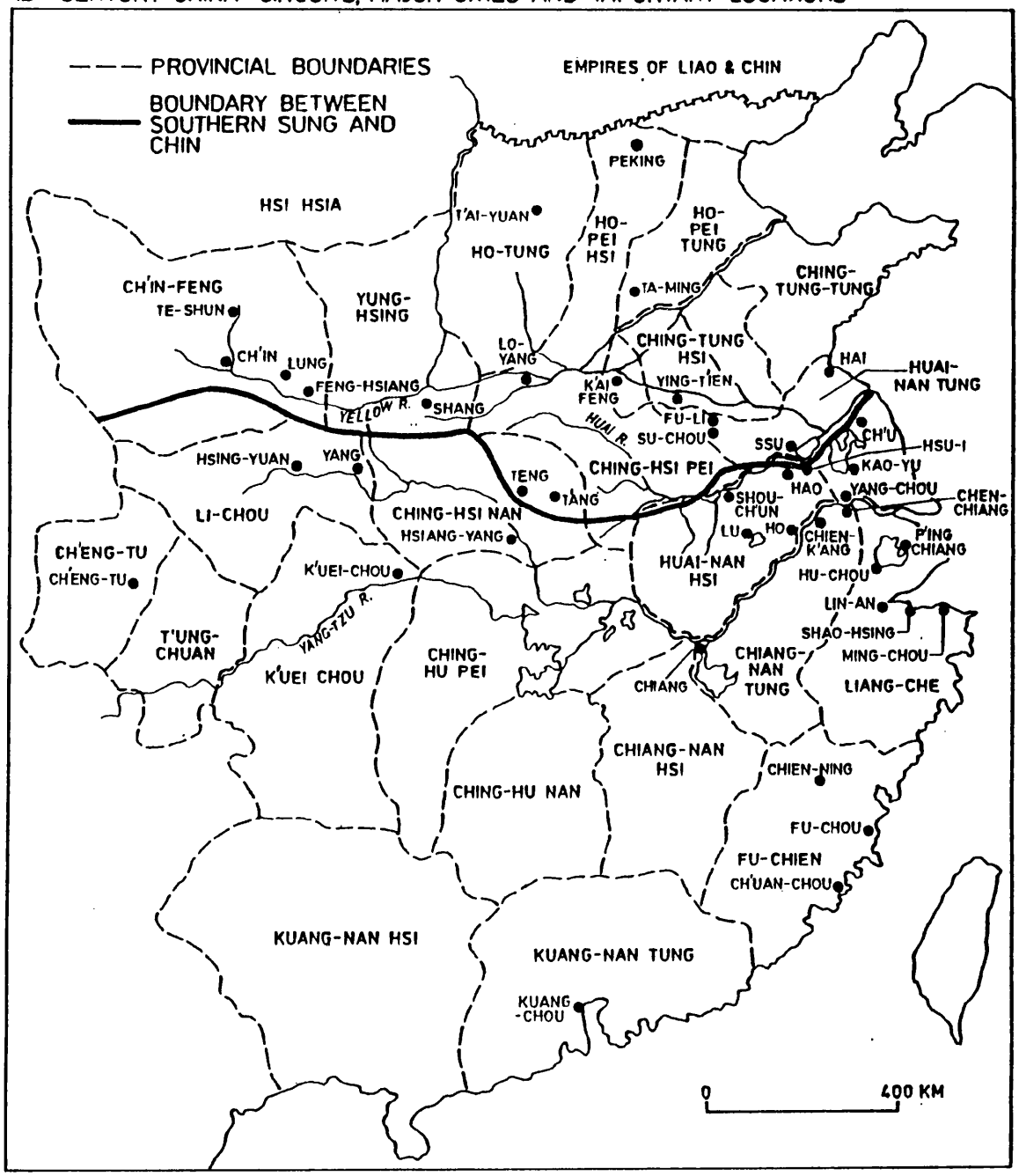
ABBREVIATIONS

CCC	..	Yang Wan-li, Ch'eng-chai chi
CCTS	..	Ch'ien Mu, Chung-kuo li-tai cheng-chih te-shih
CHSC	..	Anonymous, Huang-Sung chung-hsing liang-ch'ao sheng-cheng
CS	..	T'o T'o et.al., Chin-shih
CTYY	..	Chou Mi, Ch'i-tung yeh-yü
CWC	..	Chu Hsi, Chu Wen-kung wen-chi
CYTC	..	Li Hsin-ch'uan, Chien-yen i-lai ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi
CYYL	..	Li Hsin-ch'uan, Chien-yen i-lai hsi-nien yao-lu
HTC	..	Pi Yüan, Hsü tzu-chih t'ung-chien
JAS	..	Journal of Asian Studies
KKC	..	Lou Yüeh, Kung-k'uei chi
MCC	..	Wang Shih-p'eng, Mei-ch'i hsien-sheng wen-chi
MFML	..	Shih Hao, Mou-feng chen-yin man-lu
PMHP	..	Hsü Meng-hsin, San-ch'ao pei-meng hui-pien
SHY	..	Hsü Sung comp., Sung hui-yao chi-kao
SJIS	..	Ting Ch'uan-ching comp., Sung-jen i-shih hui-pien
SKCP	..	Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen
SL	..	Wang Fu-chih, Sung Lun
SLCYS	..	Chou K'ang-hsieh comp., Sung-Liao-Chin-Yüan shih lun-chi
SPTK	..	Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an
SS	..	T'o T'o et.al., Sung-shih
SSCW	..	Anonymous, Sung-shih ch'üan-wen hsü tzu-chih t'ung-chien
SSPM	..	Ch'en Pang-chan comp., Sung-shih chi-shih pen-mo

SSYCC	..	Sung-shih yen-chiu-chi
SWCT	..	Fu Tseng-hsiang comp., Sung-tai Shu-wen chi-ts'un
TSCC	..	Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng
WCC	..	Chou Pi-ta, Wen-chung chi
WHTK	..	Ma Tuan-lin, Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao
YWL	..	Anonymous, Chung-hsing yü-wu lu

In this study, Chinese dates are abbreviated in the following way: 6th/1162 refers to the sixth month of 1162. When the day of the month is important, it is placed first as a cardinal number, e.g. 15/6th/1162 refers to the fifteenth day of the sixth month of 1162.

12th CENTURY CHINA: CIRCUITS, MAJOR CITIES AND IMPORTANT LOCATIONS



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE HISTORICAL SETTING

The Sung Dynasty (960-1279)

In the two thousand years of Chinese imperial history, there were many dynasties which rose and fell. Among these, the Sung dynasty, which lasted from the mid-tenth to the late thirteenth century, represents a significant era in many aspects. It has generally been recognized as a time of widespread social, economic, political and intellectual developments which shaped much of China down to the twentieth century.[1] For this reason, it has been variously called the "early modern" or "neo-traditional" period in Chinese history.[2]

The Sung dynasty came into existence in 960 A.D. when its founder, T'ai-tsu 太祖[3] usurped the throne of the Later Chou 後周

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1. James T.C. Liu and Peter J. Golas, "Introduction", Change In Sung China: Innovation or Renovation (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath & Company, 1969), p.vii.

2. For general assessments on the significance of this new era and the various terms used to describe it, see E.A. Kracke, Jr., "Sung Society: Change Within Tradition," Far Eastern Quarterly, Vol.14, No.4 (August 1955), pp.479-488; James T.C. Liu, "The Neo-Traditional Period (ca. 800-1900) in Chinese History," The Journal of Asian Studies (JAS), Vol.24, No.1 (November 1964), pp.105-107; and E.O. Reischauer & J.K. Fairbank, East Asia: The Great Tradition (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1968), pp.211-242.

3. The official biography of Sung T'ai-tsu is found in T'o T'o 脫脫, Sung Shih 宋史 (SS) (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü 中華書局, 1977), chs.1-3, pp.1-52.

last of the regimes which had dominated North China during the period of disunion, known as the era of the Five Dynasties.[4] T'ai-tsu (r. 960-976) succeeded in establishing the dynasty on a more permanent basis than the rulers of the Five Dynasties had done, and helped to bring about the reunification of the Chinese empire by subjugating the southern states. This task of reunification was continued and brought to completion by T'ai-tsu's brother and immediate successor, T'ai-tsung 太宗 (r.976-997),[5] who then passed on the throne to his descendants. A total of nine emperors ruled the Sung empire from the imperial capital of K'ai-feng 開封 in Ho-nan 河南, until disaster struck in 1126-27, when the invading Jurchen (nü-chen 女真) forces captured the city together with the last two emperors, Hui-tsung 徽宗 and Ch'in-tsung 欽宗. A son of Hui-tsung, Prince K'ang (K'ang-wang 康王) managed to escape capture and continued the struggle against the enemy. He became the founder of the Southern Sung, so-called because from 1127 until the end of the dynasty in 1279, Sung rule was limited to the central and southern parts of China. The term Northern Sung thus refers to the period 960-1127.

Sung government in overall perspective has usually been distinguished by three distinctive features, namely, centralization,

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4. The Five Dynasties, namely, Later Liang 後梁, Later T'ang 後唐, Later Tsin 後晉, Later Han 後漢 and Later Chou 後周 existed successively in North China from the fall of the T'ang dynasty in 907 to the founding of the Sung in 960. At the same time, South China was fragmented into several separate states, so that this period of Chinese history is traditionally known as the age of the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms.

5. The official biography of T'ai-tsung is found in SS, chs. 4 & 5, pp.53-102.

absolutism and the supremacy of civilian rule over the military. The trend towards absolutism and centralization was firmly set during the founding of the Sung when T'ai-tsu created an institutional framework for absolute government that continued to function for the last millenium of imperial history.[6] Drawing a lesson from his own usurpation, T'ai-tsu was eager to prevent another such occurrence. Thus one of his first acts was to deprive the leading generals of their military power by pensioning them off with suitable rewards.[7] He then replaced his former comrades-in-arms with men who were less influential and who would be more easily controlled, while some positions in the Imperial Army were deliberately left vacant.[8]

After consolidating his own position by curtailing the influence of the military, T'ai-tsu carried out a policy of centralization by reducing regional power. He placed all newly-acquired

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6. For a detailed study on the founding of the Sung dynasty, see Edmund H. Worthy, "The Founding of Sung China, 950-1000: Integrative Changes in Military and Political Institutions," Ph.D. dissertation (Princeton University, 1975).

7. For an account of the celebrated act of T'ai-tsu in gathering power from the military, or popularly known as "stripping the military authority (of the generals) with one cup of wine" (pei-chiu shih ping-ch'üan 杯酒釋兵權), see Li T'ao 李燾, Hsü Tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien 續資治通鑑長編 (Taipei: Shih-chieh shu-chü 世界書局, 1961), ch.2, pp.10b-11b. This celebrated act of T'ai-tsu has nevertheless been proven to be from legendary versions inadvertently adopted by the standard histories. The actual process of gathering military power from the generals was in fact more complicated than it appeared and took a much longer time to achieve. See Hsü Kuei 徐規 & Fang Chien-hsin 方建新, "'Pei-chiu shih ping-ch'üan' shuo hsien-i" 杯酒釋兵權說獻疑, Wen-shih 文史, No.14 (Peking, 1982), pp.113-116.

8. Nieh Ch'ung-ch'i 聶崇岐, "Lun Sung T'ai-tsu shou ping-ch'üan," 論宋太祖收兵權 in Sung-shih ts'ung-k'ao 宋史叢考 (Peking, 1979), pp.270-271.

territories under the direct control of the central government by appointing officials from the central bureaucracy to govern them. He also transferred the best provincial military units to the capital.[9] A further step in centralization involved the elimination of the military governors' (chieh-tu shih 節度使) control over the finance and administration of the various prefectures and the restoration of such powers to the central government.[10] This policy of centralization which has been metaphorically described as "strengthening the trunk and weakening the branches" (ch'iang-kan jo-chih 強幹弱枝) was carried to conclusion by T'ai-tsu's successor, T'ai-tsung. The latter, much more than T'ai-tsu himself, also gave the dynasty its distinctive feature as a strong bureaucratic regime where civilian officials and values overwhelmingly predominated over the military.[11] These two emperors therefore set the pattern of government for future Sung emperors to follow.

In the realm of civil administration, the expansion of the emperor's power was accompanied by a sharp decline in the influence of the chief councillor (i.e. the prime minister). Even though the chief governmental organs of the Three Departments (san-sheng 三省)

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9. Li T'ao, op.cit., ch.6, p.11b.

10. An important measure taken by T'ai-tsu in this direction was the sending of officials from the central government, known as "Exchange Intendants" (chuan-yün shih 轉運使) to take charge of finance in the various prefectures. See Nieh Ch'ung-ch'i, op.cit., pp.278-79.

11. Edmund H. Worthy, op.cit., p.4. The author emphasizes the point that civilian government was established during the reign of T'ai-tsung rather than during the time of T'ai-tsu, whose regime has been described as "militocratic absolutism", where the military factor was still of paramount importance. See Chapter VIII, pp.295-311.

consisting of the Secretariat (chung-shu 中書), the Chancellery (men-hsia 門下) and the Department of Ministries (shang-shu 尚書) had been inherited from the T'ang, the Sung system operated quite differently in that functions formerly performed by the Three Departments were separated and given to other organs of government. The civil and military administrations were headed by the Secretariat-Chancellery and the Bureau of Military Affairs (shu-mi yüan 樞密院) respectively, while the management of economic affairs was entrusted to the Economic Commission (san-ssu 三司).[12] The heads of both civil and military administration belonged to the Council of State, the most important member of which was the chief councillor (tsai-hsiang 宰相), who was also the chief of the Secretariat-Chancellery. Below him were a number of assistant councillors (chih-cheng 執政). The assistant civil councillor, being next in position to the chief councillor, was known as Second Privy Councillor (ts'an-chih cheng-shih 參知政事), while the assistant military councillors held varying titles and were the chief officials of the Bureau of Military Affairs.[13] Under the Sung system, the

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12. E.A. Kracke, Jr., Civil Service in Early Sung China, 960-1067 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968 reprint), p.38.

13. The titles held by the military councillors differed from time to time. They might be Commissioner of Military Affairs (shu-mi shih 樞密使), Administrator or Co-Administrator of the Military Bureau (chih shu-mi-yüan shih 知樞密院事 or t'ung-chih 同知), or Signatory or Co-Signatory Official of the Military Bureau (ch'ien-shu shu-mi-yüan shih 簽書樞密院事 or t'ung ch'ien-shu 同簽書), see ibid. Most of the official titles in this thesis are rendered in accordance with E.A. Kracke, Jr., Translations of Sung Civil Service Titles (Sung Project, Paris: Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, 1957).

chief councillor was only in charge of civil administration and had no power over military and economic matters, a fact which has been regarded as contributing to the decline of his authority.[14] Another indication of this decline was the fact that during the T'ang imperial decrees (chao-shu 詔書) had been drafted in their final version by the Secretariat and then submitted to the emperor for approval; during the Sung, on the other hand, the chief councillor had to submit several proposals to the emperor and only drafted the decree once the latter had made his decision.[15]

The power of the chief councillor was further reduced by changes which occurred in the censorial system during this period. There were two categories of censorial officials: the censors (yü-shih 御史) of the Censorate (yü-shih t'ai 御史台); and the policy-criticism officials (chien-kuan 諫官) of the Bureau of Policy Criticism (chien-yüan 諫院), frequently referred to as t'ai-chien 台諫. Traditionally, the censors had been regarded as the "ears and eyes" (erh-mu 耳目) of the emperor because of their responsibilities for surveillance; in constrast, the policy-criticism officials were often called "lips and tongues" (ch'un-she 唇舌) of the chief councillor because of their duty to remonstrate with the emperor.[16] The latter role was altered during the Sung as

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14. See Fang Hao 方豪, Sung Shih 宋史 (Taipei: Hua-kang chu-pan she 華岡出版社, 1966 reprint), Vol. 1, pp. 32-33; Ch'ien Mu 錢穆, "Lun Sung-tai hsiang-ch'üan 論宋代相權 in Sung-shih yen-chiu chi 宋史研究集 (SSYCC), Vol. 1 (Taipei, 1958), pp. 455-462.

15. Fang Hao, op.cit., p.33; Ch'ien Mu, Chung-kuo li-tai cheng-chih te-shih 中國歷代政治得失 (CCTS) (Hong Kong: Ta-chung-kuo yin -shua ch'an 大中國印刷廠, 1966 reprint), p.66.

16. Ch'ien Mu, CCTS, p.69; Fang Hao, op.cit., p.33.

the policy-criticism officials were made independent of control by the chief councillor.[17] Furthermore, the chief councillor was prohibited from recommending either censors or policy-criticism officials, who were appointed by the emperor himself.[18] Consequently, the duties of the policy-criticism officials were no longer restricted to remonstrating with the emperor, for like the censors, they could also impeach officials, including the chief councillor. In this way, both the censors and the policy-criticism officials served as the "ears and eyes" of the emperor.

From the above, it might appear that the Sung chief councillor was completely at the mercy of the emperor; yet this was not necessarily the case in practice. As E.A. Kracke has pointed out, "If one of several opposing groups within the government could pack the Council of State with its adherents, and from there capture the Censorate and the Bureau of Policy Criticism, appointing its leading opponents to posts away from the capital, and keep others from access to the imperial ears, the ruler was in fact (perhaps unconsciously) a prisoner."[19] From this, it is clear that there was no hard and fast rule with regard to the decline of councillor power; much depended on whether the chief councillor was able to manage the political situation to his own advantage.

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17. During the Sung the Bureau of Policy Criticism became an independent body and was no longer under the direct control of the chief councillor. See Ch'ien Mu, CCTS, p.69.

18. Ibid.

19. E.A. Kracke, Jr., Civil Service in Early Sung China, 960-1067, p.30.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the emperor possessed the ultimate power and whatever authority the chief councillor had was delegated to him by the sovereign. A look at Sung politics in practice shows that whenever a chief councillor was dominant or "powerful", it was largely because the emperor willingly delegated his authority to the minister concerned. For example, during the Northern Sung, Emperor Shen-tsung 神宗 (r. 1068-1085) expanded the executive power of his chief councillor, Wang An-shih 王安石 (1027-1086) to enable the latter to carry out major reforms.[20] Another dominant chief councillor was Ts'ai Ching 蔡京 (1047-1126), who was the favourite minister of Emperor Hui-tsung (r. 1101-1125). During his time the executive power of the chief councillor was enlarged to such an extent that Ts'ai Ching was able to wield tremendous influence over the censorial officials, so much so that from their supposed function as "ears and eyes" of the emperor, they became the "ears and eyes" of the chief councillor instead.[21] Ts'ai set the precedent for the suppression and domination of censorial officials by Ch'in Kuei 秦檜 (1100-1155) and other powerful ministers of the Southern Sung.

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20. Wang An-shih enjoyed the almost unreserved trust of Shen-tsung from the beginning of the reforms in 1069 to the time of his temporary resignation from the court in 1074. See James T.C. Liu, Reform In Sung China (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968 reprint), p.52.

21. For a brief account of the censorial role during the chief councillorship of Ts'ai Ching, see Gong Wei Ai, "The Participation of Censorial Officials in Politics During the Northern Sung Dynasty (960-1126 A.D.)," Chinese Culture, Vol.15, No.2 (June, 1974), pp.30-41.

Another important characteristic of Sung government was the emphasis on the role of the scholar-officials which led to the rise of a highly civilian and bureaucratized empire. The strong civilian bureaucracy built up by T'ai-tsung remained a permanent institution for the rest of the Sung dynasty. At the same time, what has been called the respectful and benevolent accommodation of scholar-officials by the emperor became a prominent feature in Sung politics.[22] T'ai-tsu laid down an injunction which prohibited the killing of scholar-officials.[23] The image of the scholar-officials was further enhanced by the founding emperor's comment that a chief councillor should be a scholar,[24] and, in comparison with previous and later times, officials were on the whole well-treated and respected during the Sung. Under such circumstances, it is therefore not surprising that the Sung witnessed a new height in the ideological authority of the Confucian scholar-officials. E.A. Kracke is of the opinion that this ideological authority tends to restrain the ruler's authority and enhance the bureaucrat's power and prestige.[25] Though this seems to contradict the rise in imperial authority discussed earlier, the irony is that these two seemingly contradictory developments took place along side of each other.

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22. See James T.C. Liu, "An Administrative Cycle in Chinese History: The Case of the Northern Sung Emperors," Harvard Journal of Asian Studies, Vol.11, No.2 (1962), p.139.

23. Wang Fu-chih 王夫之, Sung Lun 宋論 (SL) (Taipei: Chiu-ssu ch'u-pan she 九思出版社, 1977), ch.1, p.4.

24. Li T'ao, op.cit., p.7, p.6a.

25. E.A. Kracke, Jr., "The Chinese and the Art of Government," in The Legacy of China, ed. by Raymond Dawson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), p.315.

One can understand such an irony better if one takes into consideration the fact that a significant aspect of the Chinese political tradition is the co-existence and equilibrium of different political forces and competing concepts.[26] Such mutual accommodation of conflicting elements in the traditional Chinese state can be seen in the interdependence of the Confucian school and the imperial ruler. While the emperor derived his authority from Confucianism and was obliged to respect the Confucian scholars for their ideological authority, the scholar-officials, on the other hand, had to work within the confines of Confucian norms and values, which sanctioned imperial power. An apt term, therefore, to describe this interdependent governmental system of the Sung state is "bureaucratic absolutism",[27] whereby a strong or ingenious emperor could manipulate the civilian bureaucracy for autocratic purposes but at the same time, could be checked by it in some ways.

Corresponding with the rise in Confucian ideological authority was the promotion of education,[28] and the civil service examination system came to play an extremely important role in political life. The increasing importance of the examinations in the recruitment of officials inevitably led to the further expansion

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26. Ibid.

27. This term is suggested by James T.C. Liu in his article "Bureaucratic Politics of Accommodation in Southern Sung China," unpublished seminar paper, University Seminar on Traditional China, Columbia University (April 15, 1969); see also Edmund H. Worthy, op.cit., p.311.

28. For a detailed study on education in the Northern Sung period, see Thomas Lee, "Education in Northern Sung China," Ph.D. dissertation (Yale University, 1974).

of imperial power because whatever power held by the bureaucrat was due to his appointment, and the power of appointment was ultimately in the hands of the emperor, who exercised full control over the civil service. Therefore, with the path of upward mobility being largely restricted to taking the examinations, the elite became closely allied with the emperor, who made the former into an integral part of the imperial machinery.[29] While contributing to the spread of education and the rise of scholar-officials in general, the civil service examinations also made the bureaucrats vulnerable to the arbitrariness of the imperial ruler. This forms another ambivalent feature of the "bureaucratic-absolutist" empire.

It should also be mentioned that with the establishment of civilian government and the rise of ideological authority, the scholar-officials began to play a more active role in politics. Their increasing participation in court politics nevertheless led to negative results in that it was directly responsible for the prevalence of factional disputes during the Sung dynasty.[30] Factionalism not only caused political instability but it also led to division among the scholar-officials that eventually weakened their own power. Such factional strife and power struggles remained a common phenomenon of the dynasty until the end of the Southern Sung.

Having discussed the major political traits of the Sung, we shall now turn to other significant developments. Economically, the

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29. Ibid., p.20.

30. For an account of factional disputes during the Northern Sung, see Fang Hao, op.cit., Vol.1, ch.8, pp.104-133.

Sung empire was perhaps the richest political entity in the world at the time. Advances in agriculture led to great increase in the productivity of the fields.[31] The rise in agricultural productivity was paralleled by similar advances in the industrial sector of the economy.[32] It was a time of great commercial development and urbanization, accompanied by the rise of a money economy, which was replacing the old transactions in kind.[33] For an agricultural society, the extent of economic diversification and the increasing importance of money were indeed remarkable and were unprecedented in Chinese history.

Nevertheless, despite the general prosperity experienced during the first century of its existence, the government began to face serious financial difficulties by the middle of the 11th century, caused by declining revenue from taxes, increasing expenditures in maintaining the greatly expanded bureaucracy, and the heavy cost of military preparedness. The economic reforms of Wang An-shih led to some improvement in the sense that there was a substantial increase in state revenue, but the people's tax burden became much heavier than before. Heavy taxation remained the

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31. One such agricultural advance which greatly increased productivity was the introduction of the early-ripening rice. See Ping-ti Ho, "Early Ripening Rice in Chinese History," in Economic History Review, 9 (1956), pp.200-218.

32. The upsurge in the coal and iron industries was particularly noteworthy. See Robert Hartwell, "A Revolution in the Chinese Iron and Coal Industries," JAS, Vol.21, No.2 (February 1962), pp.153-162.

33. Lien-sheng Yang, Money and Credit in China: A Short History (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952).

government policy until the end of the Southern Sung dynasty. However, judging from the ability of the government to balance a large state income and huge expenditure, we can conclude that the financial situation of Sung China was not at all weak.[34]

A very significant factor in Sung society was the empire's relations with its neighbours. In traditional Chinese history, the Sung has been regarded as one of the weakest dynasties because throughout the three centuries of its existence, it was continually threatened and humiliated by its nomadic neighbours. During the 10th century, even before the founding of the Sung, the Khitans founded the Liao 遼 dynasty in the north, which lasted until 1125. In addition to its original homeland further north, the Liao also controlled a strategic portion of North China immediately below the Great Wall. Repeated attempts were made to recapture this territory but all proved unsuccessful. The inability of the Sung rulers to recover this area of great strategic and historical importance led to much national humiliation and resentment. Worse still, the Sung had to sign unequal treaties and to make annual appeasement payments in order to buy peace from the Liao.[35] Such defeatist diplomacy adopted by the Chinese empire in foriegn relations was indeed a rare occurrence in the history of imperial China.

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34. For a detailed study of Sung government finance, see Hon-chiu Wong, "Government Expenditures in Northern Sung China (906-1127)," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Pennsylvania, 1975).

35. For an account of Sung relations with the Liao, see Chin Yü-fu 金毓黻, Sung-Liao-Chin shih 宋遼金史. 3 & 4, pp. Lung-men shu-tien 龍門書店, 1966 reprint), pp.20-38.

On its north-western borders, the Sung was frequently attacked by the Tanguts of the Hsi-Hsia 西夏 state (1032-1227). Wars between the Hsi-Hsia and Sung were fought from time to time during the reign of T'ai-tsung. The Sung managed intermittently to maintain a precarious peace by making annual payments to the Hsi-Hsia. Finally, after the fall of the Northern Sung, contact with the Hsi-Hsia was broken off.[36]

The last of the nomadic tribes to rise to power during the Northern Sung were the Jurchen, whose homeland was in modern Manchuria. During the early Sung period they lived beyond the eastern borders of the Liao state and paid tribute to the latter. In 1114 they rebelled against the Liao and founded the Chin dynasty the following year.[37] The Chin first defeated the Liao and then invaded the Sung in 1126. It occupied all the northern prefectures and drove the Sung to the south, where the surviving part of the empire maintained itself below the Huai 淮 River valley. An uneasy peace was maintained between the Southern Sung and the Chin until 1234, when the latter was conquered by the Mongols. The Sung survived for another few decades but eventually fell to the Mongols in 1279.

From the above account of Sung foreign relations, it is clear that the Sung had serious difficulties with the rising nomadic powers. Several factors had given rise to the military problem

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36. For a brief account of Sung relations with the Hsi-Hsia, see ibid., pp.90-93.

37. For the rise of the Chin and its subsequent conquest of the Liao and invasions of the Sung, see ibid., ch.6, pp.59-71.

faced by the Sung. The policy of centralization led to the concentration of Sung military power in professional armies centred in the capital while defence was weak elsewhere. Furthermore, the division of military authority hampered operations in time of war. The Chinese military was also handicapped because, possessing no steppe lands, the empire had difficulty acquiring horses for its cavalry. Moreover, despite heavy military expenses, the armies were poor in quality, in part because the soldiers were recruited largely from among the unsavoury of vagrant elements, who would hardly make good fighting men.[38] In the final analysis, the overall Sung emphasis on the supremacy of the civilian government and values over the military (chung-wen ch'ing-wu 重文輕武) and the resulting change in attitude toward the military establishment was largely responsible for the weakening of the Sung military machine left by its founder. The Sung empire lacked the martial spirit of the T'ang, and the nation as a whole had little enthusiasm for war. Thus the military problem faced by the early Sung was inherited by succeeding generations, which until the very end of the dynasty, were plagued by powerful nomadic neighbours, heavy armament cost and dynastic humiliation.

Finally, in the intellectual realm, the Sung dynasty was noted for the development of Neo-Confucianism. This new intellectual growth came as direct response to the economic, social and political

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38. The popular slang phrase for ordinary soldiers was the "naked and old ones" (ch'ih-lao 赤老) and the saying "Good men do not serve as soldiers, neither is good iron used to make nails" (hao-nan pu tang-ping, hao-t'ieh pu ta-ting 好男不當兵，好鐵不打釘) gained currency during the Sung. See Fang Hao, op.cit., pp.47-48.

changes which created a new awareness among the scholar-officials. The Confucian revival was also stimulated by the increasing importance of the civil service examinations which fostered the learning of the Confucian classics. The progress of printing technology further promoted the spread of learning as books became more easily accessible. Dedicated to the task of restoring the true teachings of Confucius through correct interpretation of the ancient classics, Neo-Confucianism was oriented towards the past, historic-minded and conservative.[39] On the other hand, it also incorporated many elements which were innovative and forward-looking. However, with the passing of time, the original vigour and dynamism of the intellectual trends gradually gave way to a spirit of conservatism, which became the dominant note during the Southern Sung. Such a development was also closely related to the factor of foreign threat, as we shall see in the following sections.

The Southern Sung (1127-1279)

It has been mentioned earlier that the Jurchen invasion of 1126 led to the occupation of North China by the enemy, while the Sung state continued to survive in a much smaller area south of the Huai River. Following the precedent of dynastic restoration or resurgence (chung-hsing 中興) whereby the dynasty which had fallen after a major disaster was revived or restored by the same imperial family, the Southern Sung is therefore regarded as the revival or

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39. James T.C. Liu, "How did a Neo-Confucian school become the state orthodoxy?", Philosophy East and West, Vol.23, No.4 (October 1973), pp.483-84.

the restoration of the Northern Sung. The new regime not only survived further attacks from the enemy, but also consolidated itself from the Huai and Yang-tzu 揚子 valleys southward. Externally, the empire consolidated its frontier towards the north, from the Huai River westward to the Hsiang-yang 襄陽 (in modern Hu-pei 湖北) region and further west to the mountain ranges in Ssu-ch'uan 四川. Internally, consolidation took place with the establishment of a stable political order and the maintenance of a tolerable socio-economic order.

While it is true that after the fall of the Northern Sung, the dynastic line continued under the Southern Sung, and that the major political institutions underwent little change during the latter period, it should nevertheless be noted that the Southern Sung was by no means a mere continuation of the Northern Sung. The move of the seat of government to the south was to result in many developments which were unprecedented in Chinese history. First of all, the move to the south signifies a new phase in the socio-economic development of South China. It represents the crucial stage when the south finally replaced the north as the economic centre of China. The process of this important shift from north to south had actually been taking place for several centuries. Southern China, especially the lower Yang-tzu region, became increasingly important since the 8th century, when political disorder in the north led to a steady flow of population to the south. The economic prosperity of the Yang-tzu delta was already quite noticeable during the era of the Five Dynasties, and by the time of the Northern Sung, the government became more and more reliant on the south as the main

granary of China and the chief source of its economic strength.[40] The shift of the key political area to South China after the fall of the Northern Sung therefore meant the retreat of the empire to its strongest economic base. It was here that the Southern Sung rulers were able to build up a sufficiently strong and stable empire. The favourable environment of the Yang-tzu region provided the state with rich resources which helped to maintain stability by supporting a growing population, an over-crowded bureaucracy and enormous military expenditures.

The reduction in the size of the empire after the loss of North China also had other socio-economic consequences. Since Southern Sung was a more crowded society, it naturally saw the intensification of the commercialization and urbanization which had been taking place during the Northern Sung. One interesting development was the growth of maritime commerce, which was greatly stimulated by the spirit of competition, the limited living space and the proximity of the newly established government to the coast. At the same time, naval skills developed rapidly, and Southern Sung was noted for the creation of a strong and highly efficient navy which made China into a strong sea-power.[41]

Even more important than the shift of the key economic area to the south was the setting up of a geo-political empire in the

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40. See Chang Chia-chü 張家駒, Liang-Sung ching-chi chung-hsin ti nan-i 兩宋經濟中心的南移 (Hupei: Hupei Jen-min ch'u-pan-she 湖北人民出版社 1957).

41. Jung-pang Lo, "The Rise of China as a Sea Power," in Far Eastern Quarterly, 14 (1955), pp.489-503.

south-eastern coast of China. The building of a coastal empire facing inland was unprecedented in the history of pre-modern China.[42] The geographical location of its political centre had profound influences upon the politics of the time, which operated in a rather different mode from that of the Northern Sung. We shall now examine the major political traits inherited from the Northern Sung, and analyse the subtle changes which occurred during the Southern Sung, which gave the latter its distinctive characteristics in politics.

Having inherited its major political institutions from its predecessor, the Southern Sung was inevitably influenced by the trends of certain political developments which characterized the Northern Sung. The policy of centralization, the expansion and consolidation of imperial power, and the supremacy of civilian government remained the hallmarks of the Southern Sung dynasty. However, it should be pointed out that after the fall of Northern Sung, the political atmosphere was never quite the same during the Southern Sung.

As pointed out by Professor James T.C. Liu, the principle of accommodation became the salient feature in Southern Sung politics.[43] It has been mentioned earlier that the traditional Chinese state was noted for the mutual accommodation of various political elements and

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42. Liu Tzu-chien 劉子健, "Pei-hai li-kuo yü pan-pi shan-ho ti ch'ang-ch'i wen-ting" 背海立國與半壁山河的長期穩定, Chung-kuo hsüeh-jen 中國學人, No.4 (July 1972), pp.1-14.

43. For the principle of accommodation and its effects on Southern Sung politics, see James T.C. Liu, "Bureaucratic Politics of Accommodation...," and a Chinese article by the same author, "Pao-rong cheng-chih ti t'e-tien" 包容政治的特點, Chung-kuo hsüeh-jen, No.5 (July 1973), pp.1-28.

that the early Sung bureaucratic empire had started the tradition of accommodating the scholar-officials with care. Nevertheless, it may be noted that during the Southern Sung accommodation assumed even greater importance in politics because the precarious circumstances of the newly founded empire in its early years made many political elements realize that it was by mutual accommodation and by the use of such tactics as balancing and manipulation that they could survive and co-exist with other competing forces. It is therefore not surprising that during this period accommodation was readily accepted as the principal guideline of political operation by both the emperors and the ministers in general.

The Southern Sung emperors from the time of its founder, Kao-tsung 高宗 (r. 1127-1162), had adopted the principle of accommodation to consolidate their own power. In dealing with the generals, Kao-tsung realized that it was important to keep them satisfied, though he was always suspicious of them. Since he required their service, he had to accommodate them as long as the country was still at war externally and banditry was rampant internally. In the suppression of banditry, a combination of force and persuasion, based upon accommodative tactics, was used. Finally, he gathered military power from the generals by rewarding them with prestigious titles and great wealth.[44] Also, in the treatment of ministers, the Southern Sung rulers chose to accommodate rather than suppress them. On the one hand, they kept these ministers under their tight control; on the other hand, they managed to keep a

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44. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter II.

good Confucian image for themselves by treating the officials with due respect and lenity.

It was not only the emperors who found it necessary to accommodate the officials; the chief councillors also found it expedient to apply the politics of accommodation in order to consolidate their positions in court. Even the powerful chief councillor Ch'in Kuei realized the importance of pleasing the emperor by being absolutely loyal to him, yet satisfying the majority of the bureaucrats. Also, among the officials in general, although there might be a few idealists who managed to stay on in the bureaucracy without compromising their high Confucian standards, most of the scholar-officials were more concerned about their personal careers and advancement. Under pressure they would rather sacrifice their Confucian ideals in order to conform to the requirements of accommodative politics.

It is undeniable that the politics of accommodation, being basically negative rather than positive in its approach, had an overall demoralizing influence upon the governmental system. It contained various faults such as conformity, regression, mutual deception and passivity, which on the whole not only led to stagnation but also eventual deterioration. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that accommodative politics, in spite of all its defects, may have contributed much to the consolidation of the Southern Sung regime by integrating the different political elements and maintaining the equilibrium by balancing the powers of the various political forces at court and elsewhere. Ironically, therefore, the lasting stability attained by the Southern Sung despite

its many difficulties and weaknesses, could well be attributed to the successful functioning of the politics of accommodation.

The adoption of accommodative politics by the Southern Sung rulers also signifies a new development in the nature of absolutism. The Northern Sung emperors started the tradition of "bureaucratic absolutism" by relying heavily upon the bureaucrats who were recruited through the civil service examinations and emphasizing the role of the civilian bureaucracy in politics. By the time of the Southern Sung, the emperors, after long exposure to bureaucratic politics and familiar with the ways of the bureaucrats and the tactics of bureaucratic operation, in turn made use of such bureaucratic techniques and methods in dealing with their ministers, the politics of accommodation being an obvious example. In this way, bureaucratic politics did to a certain extent shape the functioning of absolutism, which became "bureaucratized" in nature, being deeply influenced by the mode of bureaucratic politics in practice then. It can therefore be said that the Southern Sung witnessed a new phase in the development of bureaucratic absolutism, which set the pattern for future governments to follow.

Having witnessed the crucial changes in the mode of bureaucratic politics and the nature of absolutism, we shall now look at another prominent feature in Southern Sung politics, namely, the prevalence of powerful or dominant chief councillors. It has been pointed out earlier that under the Sung system, the power of the chief councillor had been greatly reduced through various institutional measures such as the division of civil and military authority and the independence of the Bureau of Policy Criticism

from the chief councillor's control. However, during the Southern Sung, the chief councillors were comparatively more powerful than their Northern Sung counterparts because of several factors, involving both institutional changes and the personality of the rulers. First of all, through another step in centralization, the three top administrative organs of the Secretariat, Chancellery and the Department of Ministries were consolidated under the unified control of the chief councillor.[45] This means that in theory the chief councillor more or less had a monopolistic control over the civilian bureaucracy. Moreover, the powers which had formerly been withdrawn from the chief councillor during the Northern Sung were "restored" to a certain extent during the Southern Sung. In times of war, the Southern Sung chief councillor regularly carried the concurrent title of Military Commissioner or its equivalent.[46] It should, however, be noted that such a title did not really entail military power as his authority was mainly supervisory in nature. His responsibility was to supervise and coordinate the separate military commands while actual military power still rested firmly in the hands of the emperor. During the Northern Sung, the Finance Commission was independent of the chief councillor. But in the Southern Sung, because of war and defence expenditures, the chief councillor also took over the control of state finance.[47] Because

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45. This took place in 4th/1129. See Anonymous, Huang-Sung chung-hsing liang-ch'ao sheng-cheng 皇宋中興兩朝聖政 (CHSC) (Taipei: Wen-hai ch'u-pan-she 文海出版社, 1967), ch.5, pp.6a-7a.

46. See footnote 17 in Chapter IV, p. 141.

47. This occurred during the reign of Hsiao-tsung; see Chapter IV, p. 141.

of the above institutional factors, the executive power of the Southern Sung chief councillors was to some extent enlarged and as a result, they could become rather powerful.

While institutional developments did provide wider opportunities for the Southern Sung chief councillors to acquire more power, it should nevertheless be noted that the personality of the emperors also had a major role to play in the rise of powerful ministers. With the exception of the first two emperors, Kao-tsung and Hsiao-tsung 孝宗, the Southern Sung rulers generally belonged to the "ineffectual-type" of emperors who preferred to delegate their authority to some favourite ministers, so long as the latter kept the situation under control and left them alone to enjoy their private lives.[48] The failure of imperial leadership, combined with the enlarged executive power held by the chief councillor, were therefore contributory to the prevalence of dominant chief ministers during the Southern Sung.

Apart from major political institutions and prominent socio-economic trends, Southern Sung also inherited from its predecessor the military problem of nomadic invasions. After the fall of Northern Sung, the Jurchen continued to constitute a great military threat to the Southern Sung empire, especially during the early years of its existence. While foreign relations stabilized into a pattern of uneasy co-existence since the peace settlement of 1141-42, the factor of foreign threat remained a perennial problem and

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48. For a brief discussion on the "ineffectual-type" of emperors, see James T.C. Liu, "An Administrative Cycle....," p.145.

continued to be the oustanding issue in political debates and court politics. The overall policy was still one of "defeatist diplomacy" which had been inherited from the Northern Sung. The military expenses were even heavier than before as 80% of the national income went to the army. Fortunately, despite its great financial burden, the prosperous and expanding economy of the Southern Sung was able to sustain the empire and keep it from falling.

Even more important than the economic burden was the impact of foreign threat upon Southern Sung thinking. The Northern Sung debacle was indeed a traumatic event which dealt a shattering blow to the scholar-officials. The formal acknowledgement of Chin paramountcy and the loss of North China, the traditional homeland of former great dynasties, put the very legitimacy of the Southern Sung regime to question. To bridge the gap between theory and reality, the ruling elite of the Southern Sung fostered the ideology of hui-fu 恢復 (reconquest or recovery of lost territory) by rationalizing that the current humiliation of the dynasty was but a temporary aberration which would eventually pass away.[49] The objective of hui-fu was constantly adhered to as a morale-booster, especially during the early years of Hsiao-tsung's reign (1162-1189). However, with the passing of time and the non-achievement of this dynastic goal, it became little more than a myth to sustain the claim of legitimacy by the southern regime. Although this officially-sanctioned myth of hui-fu dramatised the inadequacy of the dynasty, it nevertheless had the positive effect of inspiring the creative minds of the age.

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49. See Winston Wan Lo, The Life and Thought of Yeh Shih (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1974), pp.7-8.

This is shown by the fact that many renowned philosophers, scholars and poets of the Southern Sung were ardent supporters of the hui-fu ideology.[50]

The Southern Sung dynasty also witnessed the crystallization of the Neo-Confucian philosophy as one school known as Tao-hsüeh 道學 or the School of the True Way eventually rose to a position of undisputed dominance and became the state orthodoxy.[51] The school was led by Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130-1200), who has been generally proclaimed as the greatest synthesizer of Neo-Confucianism. However, it should be pointed out that despite its ascendancy during the Southern Sung, the long struggle for ideological supremacy which it underwent eventually sapped the school of the original vigour it might once have possessed.[52] In comparison with the Northern Sung, Southern Sung thinking appeared to be less innovative and dynamic, and was instead, characterized by a conservative and narrow outlook. One factor leading to the rise of this conservative attitude was the dynasty's relations with its nomadic neighbours. The sense of chagrin and insecurity caused by the dynastic humiliation on the one hand, combined with the sense of self-satisfaction due to their

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50. See ibid., pp.39-40.

51. For an account of the ascendancy of the Tao-hsüeh school during the Southern Sung, see Ch'en Pang-chan 陳邦瞻, Sung-shih chi-shih pen-mo 宋史紀事本末 (SSPM) (Peking: Chung-hua, 1977), ch.80, pp.867-896; see also James T.C. Liu, "... A Neo-Confucian School....," pp.483-505.

52. James T.C. Liu, Ou-yang Hsiu (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1967), p.22.

domestic achievements on the other, led them to look inward, into their own civilization and past glory, and to stress the importance of "Chineseness."[53] The psychological impact of the loss of North China upon the Southern Sung mind was thus manifested in this inwardly-reflective, conservative outlook, which became more and more apparent in the course of the dynasty.

Another crucial factor responsible for the growth of conservatism was of course the politics of accommodation, which was largely instrumental in the suppression or "taming" of the political thought of the time. For example, in late Southern Sung, the government greatly promoted the image of the Tao-hsüeh (now called Li-hsüeh 理學, the School of Principles) school by drawing into its service a few of its renowned scholars and granting some honour to their teachings. However, apart from these, it did not make any attempt to reform or restructure the state power. By thus accommodating the Tao-hsüeh followers, the government succeeded in making the school into a state-sponsored ideology. Its very connection with the state means that the latter had the power to manipulate it to its own advantage and even distort its theories for the sake of imposing repressive controls.[54] As Professor James Liu aptly puts it, "The great paradox of neo-Confucianism is that having been a vigorous ideological guardian of state affairs during the Northern Sung, often in conflict with the emperors and the less ideologically oriented scholar-officials, it ended up as a state-sponsored system

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53. See Thomas Lee, op.cit., pp.27-28.

54. James T.C. Liu, "... a Neo-Confucian School....," pp.504-5.

of thought that stifled questioning and criticism."[55] This unhealthy trend in the ideological and political realm is of great significance as it was chiefly responsible for the stagnation of Chinese society since the days of the late Southern Sung.

The Reign of Hsiao-tsung (1162-1189)

Having discussed the salient features of the Sung dynasty and the important developments which had taken place during the Southern Sung period, we shall now turn our attention to the reign of Hsiao-tsung and examine its major contributions to the Southern Sung regime. We shall attempt to analyse the significance of Hsiao-tsung's reign in relation to the crucial changes which we have described in the first two sections of this chapter.

Hsiao-tsung was the second emperor of the Southern Sung dynasty and it was during his reign that the regime was consolidated and the empire placed on a firm footing. Taking the Southern Sung as a whole, Hsiao-tsung's reign stands out as the most tranquil and prosperous period. Politically, it was free from the upheavals and intense power struggles which had characterized the reign of the previous emperor, Kao-tsung. Militarily, the empire was stronger than it had been for some time, and peace was maintained with the Chin state throughout Hsiao-tsung's reign following the peace settlement in 1165. With peace, there was economic recuperation and general prosperity. Hsiao-tsung's frugal policy further increased the wealth of his state. In the field of civil administration, the

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55. James T.C. Liu, Ou-yang Hsiu, p.22.

emperor exercised strict control over both the central and provincial governments, and as a result, general order and stability prevailed. It was also a time of great intellectual development, noted for the emergence of large number of talented men in the various fields of philosophy, poetry and classical studies. For these reasons, Hsiao-tsung is often singled out to be the best of the Southern Sung monarchs[56] and his reign depicted as the "golden age"[57] of the Southern Sung dynasty.

In overall perspective, the most outstanding achievement of Hsiao-tsung was the consolidation of the Southern Sung empire. From a study of Chinese dynastic history, we find that there seems to be a general pattern of development in which the founding of a dynasty was normally followed by a time of consolidation, gradual decline and final downfall. In the general dynastic pattern, the founder of the new dynasty was usually a capable and dynamic ruler who was mainly concerned with laying the foundations of his empire. Such a task in dynastic founding is generally referred to as ch'uang-yeh 創業. After the founding came a period of consolidation, which could be accomplished by the founders themselves, or, as in a great number of cases, by their immediate successors, who carried on the mission of dynasty-building by reinforcing the foundations of

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56. See annals of Hsiao-tsung in SS, ch.35, p.692.

57. See Wang Te-yi 王德毅, "Sung Hsiao-tsung chi ch'i shih-tai" 宋孝宗及其時代, kuo-li pien-i kuan kuan-k'an 國立編譯館館刊, Vol.2, No.1 (June 1974), p.4.

dynastic power.[58] In carrying out their objectives, many of these emperors tended to stress the consolidation of gains achieved during the previous administration - in other words, preserving what had been accomplished by their predecessors and building upon these previous achievements. In the process they not only strengthened the dynasty's foundations but also solidified the empire by providing it with sufficient durability. An apt term to describe this task of consolidation is shou-ch'eng 守成. It should be noted here that the emphasis is not only on preservation or maintenance (shou 守) but also on accomplishment, success and completion (ch'eng 成). We shall see that Hsiao-tsung rightly fits into this category of "consolidator" for it was during his reign that the task of dynasty-building was brought to a successful completion.

If we were to divide the history of the Southern Sung into two halves, there seems to be little doubt as to where the division should fall. Its first six decades, covering the reigns of Kao-tsung and Hsiao-tsung, were generally regarded as representing the better days of the regime, while the remaining nine decades were marked by decline. One important factor contributing to this

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58. Examples of famous dynastic consolidators include Sui Yang-ti 隋煬帝, T'ang T'ai-tsung 唐太宗, and Ming Ch'eng-tsu 明成祖. For an account of the career of Sui Yang-ti, refer to A.F. Wright, "Sui Yang-ti: Personality and Stereotype," in Confucianism and Chinese Civilization, ed. by A.F. Wright (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), pp.158-187; for T'ang T'ai-tsung, see relevant sections in Howard J. Wechsler, Mirror to the Son of Heaven: Wei Cheng at the Court of T'ang T'ai-tsung (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974); and for an account on Ming T'ai-tsu, see Edward L. Farmer, Early Ming Government: The Evolution of Dual Capitals (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), in particular ch.IV.

decline was the general deterioration in the quality of imperial leadership after the first two emperors. Both Kao-tsung and Hsiao-tsung, as founder and consolidator of the Southern Sung, had played an important role in building and revitalizing their war-shaken empire. They were both conscientious and responsible monarchs who worked diligently toward restoring and reviving the Sung regime after the fall of North China. Under their able leadership the regime was not only restored but was also consolidated. With consolidation came a lasting stability which held the empire together until its fall in 1279. Thus, despite the political decline and economic deterioration during the later half of the Southern Sung, the empire survived stably until it was finally defeated by the Mongols. When and how did this stability come about? It is the contention of this thesis that it was largely attained during the reign of Hsiao-tsung.

While recognizing the fact that Hsiao-tsung's accomplishments were to a certain extent built upon the foundations laid by Kao-tsung, it should nevertheless be emphasized that there existed outstanding differences between the reigns of these two emperors. One major distinction is that the reign of Kao-tsung was for most part a period of instability because of external threat and internal political struggles among court rivals. On the other hand, the overall picture of Hsiao-tsung's reign was one of peace and order, both in external relations and internal politics. Another distinguishing factor is the fact that the image of Kao-tsung as a good Confucian monarch was to some extent impaired by his appointment of Ch'in Kuei and his heavy reliance upon the highly unpopular

chief councillor in carrying out the peace policy.[59] However, there existed no such "villain" during the reign of Hsiao-tsung to weaken the emperor's image. In fact, the reign of Hsiao-tsung was the only period in Southern Sung history which was not noted for the presence of a powerful, notorious chief councillor. On the contrary, a notable feature in court politics during this period was the expansion of imperial power. Indeed, the emperor's control seems to have spread to all levels of the administration and his influence was felt in every corner of the empire.

In the central government, Hsiao-tsung effectively controlled the bureaucracy by keeping ministerial power subordinate to imperial power. Even though in theory the emperor raised the status of the chief councillors through several political and administrative reforms, in practice he greatly restricted their power by various manipulative measures. These include frequently changing his chief ministers by removing them from office after a short duration, and refusing to assign them proper responsibility. Therefore, despite the expansion of executive power, the chief councillors did not actually benefit from it since such power was rarely, if at all, delegated to them. By reserving for himself the rights to exercise the executive power and by his stringent control over the chief

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59. For example, the great Ch'ing commentator on Sung history, Wang Fu-chih, besides criticizing Kao-tsung for his policy of appeasement, also censured the emperor for his "reliance on evil men." See SL, ch.10, p.200. The compilers of the Sung Official History, while commending Kao-tsung for his frugality and benevolence, also lamented his lack of accomplishment in the task of restoration because of his confidence in treacherous ministers and his persecution of righteous ministers and generals. See SS, ch.32, p.612.

councillors, Hsiao-tsung placed the entire bureaucracy under his personal leadership.

In his efforts to enhance imperial power, Hsiao-tsung also resorted to using the Inner Court as a balance to the regular bureaucracy of the Outer Court. From times of old, autocratic rulers of imperial China frequently managed to weaken the minister's power through a small, informal and controllable group stationed in the palace and referred to as the Inner Court.[60] They usually comprised several imperial favourites of different backgrounds and titles, who served the emperor as his personal attendants. Hsiao-tsung followed the same practice by granting special privileges to certain members of the Inner Court. The granting of imperial favours to these so-called "close attendants" (chin-hsi 近侍) of the emperor led to vehement protests by the ministers on many occasions. Although Hsiao-tsung was regarded as one of the most enlightened monarchs in Chinese history, he was nevertheless augmenting the trend of concentrating power in imperial hands, even to the extent of allowing some minor court favourites to interfere with the proper functioning of the bureaucracy.[61]

An examination of the censorial role in court politics during this period further shows that Hsiao-tsung also made clever use of the censorial officials to bring about the dismissal of ministers who had either not come up to his standards or who had

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60. See Pei Huang, Autocracy At Work (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1974), p.5.

61. See the comments of the compilers of the Sung official history in SS, ch.470, p.13677.

displeased him in some way or other. On the other hand, unlike most other Sung rulers, he was extremely cautious that the censors did not become the instruments of the ministers to strengthen the latter's power. By restoring the censorial officials to their proper function of serving as his "ears and eyes", Hsiao-tsung greatly reduced their participation in factional politics, and the tranquil political atmosphere contributed in no small way to the stability of the government.

From the many declarations made by Hsiao-tsung, it appears that he was a rather broad-minded monarch who encouraged his ministers to speak up and was on the whole receptive to criticism. As a result, court politics were generally characterized by the healthy spirit of open criticism and intense debates, especially in the early years of his reign. The courage and outspoken behaviour portrayed by some of the ministers in their confrontations with the emperor seem to indicate a general rise in the ideological authority of the scholar-officials. This is further shown by the fact that on many occasions, Hsiao-tsung was obliged to listen to the ministers and make a show of accepting their opinion or even commending them for their criticism. However, this was all part of accommodative politics for by so doing, the emperor projected a good Confucian image for himself, though in actual fact, he often paid only lip service to the admonitions of his ministers. More often than not, he acted according to his personal decisions; consequently, the effectiveness of ideological authority was frequently restricted by the autocratic exercise of imperial power.

The expansion of imperial authority was not merely confined to the central government, but was even extended to the provincial administration through a policy of centralization and territorial consolidation. The centralized control of prefectural and local administration was also achieved by emphasizing the role of circuit intendants (chien-ssu 監司) in supervising prefectural administrators (chün-shou 郡守) through a system of merit-evaluation.[62] By taking a personal interest in provincial and prefectural administrations and by keeping a close watch upon the performance of the circuit intendants and prefectural administrators, the emperor succeeded in imposing an effective network of control throughout the land.

Where defence and military matters are concerned, Hsiao-tsung was no less vigorous in his efforts. Besides strengthening the empire's defence by the building and repairing of fortifications, the emperor also paid particular attention to the training and recruitment of army personnel and the maintenance of discipline among the troops. In the military realm, it could be noted that Hsiao-tsung was moving in the same direction of concentrating power in his own hands by keeping the armies under his personal control. Also, Hsiao-tsung appears to be more militarily inclined than his predecessor. Despite the conclusion of the peace settlement, he did not relinquish his ambition to recapture the lost territory. In contrast, the majority of the officials, while recognizing the importance of hui-fu and upholding it as the dynastic goal, were

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62. See Chapter V, pp. 221-223.

nevertheless generally in favour of self-preservation rather than expansion.[63] Because of the overall attitude of the scholar-officials, Hsiao-tsung often found it difficult to share his cherished hope of reconquest with them and this led him to the belief that these Confucian scholar-officials were generally inflexible and impractical. The lack of support on the part of the scholar-officials for Hsiao-tsung's ambition in this area also explains why the emperor frequently made personal decisions on military matters in consultation with his Inner Court attendants rather than adhering to public opinion.

Hsiao-tsung's financial policy was also closely connected with his ambition to achieve hui-fu. This is shown by the fact that despite the stopping of war, 80% of the national income continued to be allotted to the army. Because of the extremely high cost of defence and military preparedness, various reforms were introduced to reduce expenditure, and the policy of frugality was frequently emphasized. Hsiao-tsung's careful management of the state's economy not only enabled the empire to recuperate financially but also greatly enriched it. In his management of the state's treasuries, it should again be noted that it was the emperor's policy to channel the empire's wealth into his private purse rather than into the government treasury. Although the funds were specially reserved for future military campaigns and earmarked for the mission of reconquest, the fact that the emperor kept these in his privy treasury reveals his intention of keeping financial power in his own hands.

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63. For example, see the arguments of Liu Kung and Ch'en Liang-yu in Chapter IV, pp. 179-81 and those of Chang Shih on p. 184 of the same chapter.

It can be deduced from the above that the primary objective in the consolidation programme of Hsiao-tsung seems to be the attainment of internal strength and stability through the enhancement of imperial power. This objective proved to be the governing factor in the formulation of his policies and the implementation of various reforms which were geared towards ensuring the supremacy of the emperor. It can be clearly seen that the emperor achieved consolidation by concentrating political, military and financial powers not only in the central government but also in his own hands. As a result, it is not surprising that the ultimate power of the emperor attained a new height, leading to a further rise in absolutism. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that such concentration of powers in the hands of a strong and capable monarch like Hsiao-tsung could function effectively for it had the positive effect of stabilizing the regime and bringing about general order, through which he was able to maintain a reign of peace and tranquility.

The personal character of Hsiao-tsung undoubtedly played a decisive role in making him an outstanding consolidator and a major architect of the Southern Sung empire. He was a conscientious, persistent and energetic ruler, who was also practical-minded and efficient. He worked tirelessly day and night, attending court, reading memorials, interviewing officials and even holding discussions with his ministers in the evenings after the normal court sessions. The emperor thus carried a very heavy workload, especially because of his policy in keeping everything under his personal supervision or control, and his reluctance to delegate authority to his assistants. Such assertive leadership and

autocratic tendencies characterized Hsiao-tsung's style of government. However, it should be borne in mind that while the enhancement of imperial authority during Hsiao-tsung's reign contributed to his success in consolidation, the growth of absolutism inevitably gave rise to countless abuses under less capable and responsible successors.[64]

It has been mentioned earlier that the Southern Sung was characterized by a conservative outlook, especially towards the later part of the dynasty. The development of such a trend could be observed during the reign of Hsiao-tsung, even as we compare the earlier (Ch'ien-tao 乾道) era with that in the later (Ch'un-hsi 淳熙) era. The early vigour and optimism which prevailed in court during the first half of Hsiao-tsung's reign soon gave way to a less healthy political atmosphere in the later period, generally marked by a spirit of acceptance, pessimism and conservatism. Undoubtedly the growth of such a political climate had a great deal to do with the increasing autocracy of the emperor and the politics of accommodation which together greatly suppressed political criticism or diversity, and instead, induced conformity and submission. Furthermore, the sense of inadequacy and powerlessness in the area of foreign relations, combined with a feeling of pride in their domestic achievements, served to enhance this attitude of conservatism in general. The growing conservatism and eventual

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64. This was what happened during the reigns of later Southern Sung emperors such as Ning-tsung 寧宗 and Li-tsung 理宗, who delegated their absolute authority to favourite ministers and as a result, numerous political and administrative problems arose.

stagnation could be seen in the slowing down of the process of change by the last century of the Southern Sung. Ironically, this stagnation of Chinese society since the thirteenth century could to a certain extent be traced to the consolidation and stability attained during Hsiao-tsung's reign.[65] In this respect, the reign of Hsiao-tsung was indeed a crucial period not only in Sung history but also in the development of Chinese history in general.

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65. While the stability brought about by Hsiao-tsung's consolidation greatly strengthened the Southern Sung empire and enabled it to withstand both internal strains and external threats for almost another century, it should nevertheless be recognised that "it was a stability that suffered from a political standstill, even creeping deterioration." See James T.C. Liu, "Sung Roots of Chinese Conservatism: The Administrative Problems," JAS, Vol.26, No.3 (May 1967), p.457.

CHAPTER II

THE FOUNDING OF THE SOUTHERN SUNG: THE REIGN OF EMPEROR KAO-TSUNG, 1127-1162

The Southern Sung came into existence in 5th/1127 when Kao-tsung formally ascended the throne at Ying-t'ien fu 應天府 (modern Shang-ch'iu hsien 商丘縣 in Ho-nan). The new regime began its life as a dynasty in flight as in the course of the next few years, the emperor led his fugitive court from place to place in order to flee from the Jurchen armies. However, despite the uncertainties and the serious difficulties which threatened the very existence of the dynasty in its early years, the Southern Sung not only managed to survive but also became sufficiently strong to last for one and a half centuries. In this respect, the contributions made by its founder towards stabilizing the regime during its early crucial years should therefore not be overlooked. During his thirty-five years on the throne, Kao-tsung had successfully laid the foundations of a geo-political empire centred in south-eastern China, provided it with an institutional framework and initiated a style of government, all of which were to influence the remainder of the Southern Sung dynasty.

The First Decade of Precarious Existence

The first ten years or so following the establishment of the Southern Sung were indeed most crucial to the survival of the dynasty. As soon as he ascended the throne at the age of twenty,

the most pressing problem which confronted Kao-tsung was the foreign threat, which forced the emperor and his court to lead a precarious life. Besides the question of dynastic survival, Kao-tsung was also obliged to keep his newly acquired throne from falling into the hands of his rivals.

Even before he became emperor, Kao-tsung was faced with a strong rival in Chang Pang-ch'ang 張邦昌, a Northern Sung chief councillor who was made emperor by the Jurchen in 3rd/1127.[1] After capturing K'ai-feng in 12th/1126, the enemy found it difficult to govern all of their newly-acquired territory and decided to withdraw temporarily north of the Yellow River. Nevertheless, they planned to keep the Ho-nan area under their control by establishing the puppet regime of Ch'u 楚 there with Chang Pang-ch'ang as its ruler. The plan failed to work out because of widespread support for the Sung imperial family. After the fall of Northern Sung and the capture of its last two emperors, loyalist forces which had earlier gathered around Prince K'ang (the only imperial prince who escaped capture because he was away from the capital) urged him to take the throne. Once the Jurchen had withdrawn, Chang Pang-ch'ang did the same by stepping down from his newly-acquired position and requesting the prince to ascend the throne. After Chang Pang-ch'ang, Kao-tsung faced an even more serious threat from another puppet

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1. Chang was on the throne for only thirty-three days from 7/3rd/1127 to 10/4th/1127, when he indicated his repentence by stepping down from his throne and deferring to the Empress Dowager Yüan-yu 元祐 (a widow of Emperor Che-tsung 哲宗), who took over the reins of government until Kao-tsung's ascension. See Anonymous, Chin-k'ang yao-lu 靖康要錄 (Taipei: Wen-hai, 1967), ch.16, pp.13a-39a.

ruler, Liu Yü 劉豫, whose regime of Ch'i 齊 in Ho-nan lasted for a good number of years from 1130 to 1137, although he was eventually deposed by the Chin.

The early years of the dynasty were also marked by great uncertainty because of the lack of consistent foreign policy. In its relations with the Chin, the Southern Sung adopted a wavering policy which vacillated between war and peace. Even though Kao-tsung himself appears to have been more oriented towards peace, he did not wish to arouse opposition from those who were keen on restoration of the empire; furthermore, his father Hui-tsung and brother Ch'in-tsung were still in Jurchen hands, a fact which made his own position extremely difficult. Moreover, the adoption of a foreign policy was by no means a one-sided affair, depending as it did on the attitudes and actions of the other side. Very often, the Sung government was simply compelled to take up arms against the Chin because of the unrelenting military pressure against it. As we shall see, it was not until Ch'in Kuei became the sole chief councillor in 1138 that the Sung began to pursue peace in earnest.

The unsettled foreign policy of the early Southern Sung period was reflected in the fluctuating fortunes of various councillors. These councillors can be roughly divided into two factions: those who desired to conclude peace with the Chin by agreeing to most of its demands; and those who aimed at reconquering the north from the Chin so as to bring about the restoration of the empire. Kao-tsung frequently changed his mind about which group to support and it was perhaps inevitable under such circumstances that there should be almost constant battles for power between them.

Early in his career, the emperor had demonstrated his ability to play court politics by balancing one faction against the other so that neither would become powerful enough to dominate the court. Though frequently entangled in the great factional struggle, he was able to manipulate the political situation to his own advantage. Also, because of the critical situation he was in, Kao-tsung found it expedient to adopt the principle of accommodation in order to consolidate his rule. He treated the officials with great leniency, welcoming and accommodating all sorts of bureaucrats, including those who had compromised their loyalty and political integrity by serving under the puppet ruler Chang Pang-ch'ang.[2]

Immediately after his accession to the throne, Kao-tsung appears to have adopted an aggressive policy. This is indicated by his appointment of Li Kang 李綱 (1083-1140), one of the most ardent advocates of war, to be chief councillor, while the peace advocates, Huang Ch'ien-shen 黃潛善 and Wang Po-yen 汪伯彥, remained only assistant councillors though they had been instrumental in Kao-tsung's enthronement.[3] However, Kao-tsung's fear of the Jurchen was indicated by his refusal to take immediate action against Chang Pang-ch'ang, who was instead given the honorary title of Grand Protector (t'ai-pao 太保).[4] It seems clear that Kao-tsung had adopted a "wait and see" attitude which permitted the war and peace

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2. Li Hsin-ch'uan 李心傳, Chien-yen i-lai hsi-nien yao-lu 建炎以來繫年要錄 (CYYL) (Peking: Chung-hua, 1956), ch.6, p.153.

3. Ibid., ch.5, p.120.

4. Biography of Chang Pang-ch'ang, SS, ch.475, p.13792.

factions to exist side by side. This in turn set the scene for the first significant power struggle during this period, one in which Li Kang was to bring about the defeat of the peace faction, represented by Chang Pang-ch'ang and his supporters. Kao-tsung's support for the war faction at this time probably was motivated by his intention to consolidate his own power. He must have realized that his position was extremely vulnerable, as Chang's supporters were still influential at court. Thus, despite his fear of the Chin, Kao-tsung eventually decided to turn against Chang, who was demoted and exiled, and subsequently executed in 9th/1127, when the Jurchen made him an excuse for attacking Sung.[5] From the fall of Chang, it is clear that Kao-tsung was willing to accommodate him so long as he did not represent any threat to the throne, but the emperor did not hesitate to eliminate Chang when he realized that the latter's presence was potentially dangerous to the imperial position.

It is interesting to note that in this factional struggle, both sides enlisted the assistance of the censorial officials to bring about political attacks upon their rivals. Indeed, the prevalence of factionalism and power struggles from the very beginning of the Southern Sung had made the censorial officials active participants of such political infighting in Kao-tsung's court. The emperor himself encouraged such practices by allowing the censorial officials a free hand in impeaching the ministers who had fallen out of his favour. Succeeding emperors followed his example and it is therefore not surprising that the censorial officials played a

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5. CYYL, ch.9, p.224.

significant role in court politics throughout the Southern Sung dynasty.

That Kao-tsung was not totally in support of the war faction during the early part of his reign can be illustrated by the fact that both Huang Ch'ien-shan and Wang Po-yen were allowed to stay on as assistant councillors despite the ascendency of the war faction led by Li Kang. The emperor was no doubt grateful to Huang and Wang for their former support and assistance, but also, it was his intention to keep some of the peace advocates in power in order to act as a check against the growing influence of the militant elements at court. Thus, despite much criticism against Huang and Wang, Kao-tsung did not waver in his support for them. In 8th/1127 he even promoted Huang to the position of Right Chief Councillor and Wang to that of Administrator of the Military Bureau, while Li Kang was made Left Chief Councillor.[6] This set the scene for the second phase of the power struggle between the two factions, and this time the peace advocates emerged victorious.

A major conflict between the two sides concerned the location of the capital. Huang Ch'ien-shan and Wang Po-yen were in favour of moving the capital to the south-east which, because of its rich resources and distance from the enemy, was much more secure than other areas.[7] Although he had consistently been against the emperor retreating to the south, Li Kang maintained that if this turned out to be unavoidable, Hsiang-yang in the south-west should be chosen as

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6. Ibid., ch.8, p.198.

7. Ibid., ch.7, p.189.

the temporary capital because it was a far better base than the south-east from which to attack the enemy.[8] Kao-tsung's agreement to Huang and Wang's proposal appears to demonstrate that he had begun to have doubts about the possibility of a successful war effort. His chief concern would seem to have been his personal safety and the security of his newly-founded empire rather than the restoration of the lost territory. Li Kang, who could not compromise with such a policy, was obliged to leave the government in 8th/1127, after having served as chief councillor for only seventy-five days.

Li's downfall is a clear indication that the emperor's foreign policy was changing from war to peace. The eighth month of 1127 also witnessed the execution of the Imperial University student (t'ai-hsüeh sheng 太學生) Ch'en Tung 陳東 and the Chin-shih 進士 Ou-yang Ch'e 歐陽澈, who had memorialised against Huang Ch'ien-shan and Wang Po-yen and spoken out for Li Kang.[9] They also urged the emperor to return to K'ai-feng and to lead the army personally against the enemy. Moreover, Ch'en is said to have admonished Kao-tsung with regard to his accession, saying that this would complicate matters when Ch'in-tsung returned from the north.[10] Noting Kao-tsung's displeasure at being accused of usurping the throne, Huang Ch'ien-shan seized the opportunity to request Ch'en Tung's and Ou-yang Ch'e's execution, to which the emperor quickly

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8. Ibid.

9. CHSC, ch.2, pp.12a-12b.

10. Chao Sheng-shih 趙甡之, I shih 遺史, cited in CYYL, ch.8, p.206.

agreed. While he was generally benevolent towards his subjects, Kao-tsung was nevertheless intolerant of those who doubted the legality of his accession to the throne. In the above case, he not only went against the principle of accommodation but also violated T'ai-tsu's order against taking the life of scholar-officials.

In 9th/1127 Kao-tsung decided to adopt the proposal of the peace advocates by retreating to the south-east. Besides the political and strategic factors mentioned above, it should be pointed out that economic consideration was also extremely important in influencing the emperor's decision. As early as 7th/1127, the Co-Administrator of the Military Bureau, Chang Ch'üeh 張慤, a great financial administrator of early Southern Sung, had emphasized the significant contribution of the south-eastern region to the empire's economy.[11] As a result of his proposal, Transport Commissioners (fa-yün shih 發運使) were reappointed and assigned the important function of supervising revenue-collection from the south-east and sending it to the central government.[12] Thus by deciding to move to the south-east, Kao-tsung showed that he fully understood the tremendous importance of financial resources in building up his empire.

In 10th/1127 the court stationed itself in Yang-chou 揚州 on the north banks of the Yang-tzu. Meanwhile, fighting was still raging in the north, with the Chin pressing further and further south towards Yang-chou. Although Kao-tsung's pro-peace policy was

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11. CHSC, ch.2, p.4b.

12. Ibid.

affirmed by his appointment of Huang Ch'ien-shan and Wang Po-yen as the Left and Right Chief Councillor respectively in 12th/1128,[13] the events of the ensuing months finally led to their downfall. At the beginning of 1129, the Chin launched a large-scale invasion of the south, sweeping all before them and putting the court once more to flight. After the court had taken refuge at Hang-chou 杭州 south of the Yang-tzu, the two chief councillors were dismissed and given prefectural positions.

It was in Hang-chou that Kao-tsung encountered his most serious personal crisis since becoming emperor. In 3rd/1129 a coup d'etat was mounted by two army officers of the Imperial Guard, Miao Fu 苗傅 and Liu Cheng-yen 劉正彥 because of certain grievances against certain ministers and eunuchs.[14] Arguing that Kao-tsung had no right to stay on the throne as this would impose a problem after Ch'in-tsung's return, they forced him to abdicate in favour of his infant son, with the Empress Dowager Lung-yu 隆祐(formerly known as Yüan-yu 元祐) becoming regent.[15] Fortunately for Kao-tsung, loyalist forces led by officials Chang Chün 張浚 and Lü I-hao 呂頤浩 and generals Han Shih-chung 韓世忠, Liu Kuang-shih 劉光世 and Chang Chün 張俊 soon rallied to his support. In 4th/1129

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13. Ibid., ch.3, pp.31b-32a.

14. Miao Fu and Liu Cheng-yen were discontented because they felt that they had not been properly rewarded for their part in suppressing some bandits earlier, and they directed their anger against Wang Yüan 王淵, the Co-Signatory Official of the Military Bureau. The official biographies of Miao and Liu may be found in SS, ch.475, pp.13802-09.

15. CYYL, ch.21, p.418.

they succeeded in suppressing the rebels and Kao-tsung was restored to his throne.[16] In the same month Kao-tsung instituted an important measure in the civil government by uniting the Three Departments, namely the Secretariat, Chancellery and Department of Ministries under the control of the chief councillor.[17] Such a step in centralization appears to indicate a desire to achieve greater efficiency in the bureaucracy. It was probably also Kao-tsung's intention to expand the power of the civilian heads as a balance to the military, whose power was clearly demonstrated in the recent coup.

Kao-tsung's troubles were far from over, however, as during a subsequent Chin invasion in late 1129/early 1130, the enemy forces were able to cross to the southern side of the Yang-tzu. The emperor fled to Ming-chou 明州 (modern Ning-po 寧波) from where he and his entourage sailed south along the coast of Che-chiang 浙江.[18] Even after the withdrawal of Chin forces in 4th/1130, the position of the government was far from secure, for by now the whole of the Central Plain (chung-yüan 中原, covering the present areas of Ho-nan, Western Shan-tung 山東, Southern Shan-hsi 山西 and Eastern Shensi 陝西) had fallen into enemy hands. In 9th/1130, the Jurchen, in an attempt to fill the vacuum of a political authority in the southern reaches of the Central Plain, set up another puppet state called Ch'i, which they placed under the control of a former Sung official named Liu Yü.[19]

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16. Ibid., ch.22, p.463. Miao Fu and Liu Cheng-yen managed to flee from the loyalist forces but were subsequently captured and executed in 7th/1129.

17. CHSC, ch.5, pp.6a-7a.

18. Ibid., ch.6, pp.19b-22b.

19. Ibid., ch.8, p.8a.

During his first few years on the throne, therefore, Kao-tsung's position was extremely unstable. The legality of his accession had been questioned and, in addition to the puppet emperors enthroned by the Jurchen, there were other pretenders to the throne who appeared to have threatened Kao-tsung's position. For example, in 2nd/1130, a man by the name of Ts'ui Shao-tsu 崔紹祖, who earlier had been taken captive by the Jurchen, managed to escape to Sung territory. He subsequently claimed to belong to the royal family and to have received an order from Hui-tsung appointing him Commander-in-chief of All Armies in the Empire (t'ien-hsia ping-ma ta-yüan-shuai 天下兵馬大元帥), a position held by Kao-tsung himself prior to his enthronement. After a local official had memorialised on his behalf, Ts'ui was summoned to the capital but was discovered to be an impostor.[20] Besides Ts'ui, there were others in the 1130s who pretended to be members of the royal family and even managed to gather support from the populace.[21]

Under such precarious circumstances, Kao-tsung's first obligation as founder of the dynasty was the preservation of his throne. Externally this meant fighting the Jurchen and eliminating other rivals to the throne. Internally he had to be in constant guard against the possibility of another coup d'etat by powerful

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20. CYYL, ch.42, p.769.

21. For example, in 1131 a man surnamed Yang 楊 from Teng-chou 鄧州 assumed the title of Prince Hsin 信 (Chao Ch'in 趙榛, the eighteenth son of Hui-tsung), while in 1132, Li Po 李勃 from Wan-chou 萬州 called himself Prince Hsü 徐 (Chao Ti 趙楹, the fourteenth son of Hui-tsung). Both were executed after they were discovered to be impostors. See biography of Prince Hsin, SS, ch.246, pp.8728-29, and biography of Prince Hsü, ibid., p.8727.

generals. He was truly faced with a dilemma, for he needed the help of these generals to fight the war and to suppress domestic rebels and bandits. The emperor's first step was to consolidate his own power by assigning the generals to fight the bandits internally while seeking peace with the enemy externally.

Domestically, it was essential for the court to extend its control inland, especially in areas overrun by local armed bands and bandits. As early as 1127, various generals had been assigned to suppress the bandits in the Yang-tzu and Huai regions.[22] In dealing with these bandits, the court adhered to the principle of accommodation under which liberal terms were offered for them to join the imperial army. While those who rejected the offer were attacked, the bandits who surrendered were incorporated into the imperial army, thereby securing domestic peace as well as strengthening the government forces.[23] Under this pacification programme known as chao-an 招安, the generals, especially Yüeh Fei 岳飛, played an active role in extending central government control to the interior of Sung territory.[24] By mid 1130s most of the bandits had been brought under control. On the other hand, the above policy further strengthened the armies of the leading generals

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22. For an account of the suppression of bandits in early Southern Sung, see SSPM, ch.68, pp.673-86.

23. James T.C. Liu, "Yüeh Fei (1103-41) and China's Heritage of Loyalty," JAS, Vol.31, No.2 (February 1972), p.292.

24. See E. Kaplan, "Yüeh Fei and the Founding of the Southern Sung," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Iowa, 1970).

because of the massive surrender of the bandits and rebels.[25]

Kao-tsung's desire to pursue peace with the Chin is shown by his appointment of Ch'in Kuei, the great peace advocate, as chief councillor in 8th/1131. Ch'in had been taken captive by the Jurchen in early 1127 because of his loyalty to the Sung and his refusal to recognize the puppet regime of Ch'u. Soon after his return to Sung territory in 10th/1130,[26] Ch'in was rapidly promoted by the emperor, who was feeling extremely insecure because of Liu Yü's puppet regime and was keen to negotiate peace with the Jurchen. Since Ch'in had previously announced that he had in mind "two schemes" which he would implement once he became chief councillor,[27] Kao-tsung was hopeful that Ch'in would be able to find a solution to the international problem. However, Ch'in held his post for only one year; he was dismissed when it was revealed that his two-fold formula for peace was the cession of Ho-pei to Chin and the cession of Ho-nan to Liu Yü.[28] Kao-tsung found this formula unacceptable for although he was in favour of peace, he was unwilling to recognise the puppet ruler, and at this juncture, he still entertained hopes that Ho-nan would eventually be restored to the Sung.

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25. Wang Fu-chih has remarked that during the Shao-hsing 紹興 era (1131-1162), the troops employed by the leading generals were mostly bandits who had surrendered. See SL, ch.10, pp.181-183.

26. The fact that Ch'in Kuei could return safely to the south together with his wife had led to doubts concerning the truth of his claim that he managed to escape from the enemy. See CYYL, ch.38, pp.718-21.

27. Ibid., ch.46, p.835.

28. Ibid., ch.57, p.999.

Meanwhile, the Jurchen had given Liu control of Ho-nan and the latter moved his capital to K'ai-feng in 4th/1132. Sporadic fighting took place between the Sung and Liu's forces over the next few years. Attempts at peace negotiations were carried out by the Sung court with both Ch'i and Chin but failed.[29] In 9th/1134 Liu joined with the Jurchen to attack the Sung, and Kao-tsung was even advised by many of his officials to retreat and disperse the government offices. These suggestions were opposed by Chief Councillor Chao Ting趙鼎, however, who argued that the Sung should stand and fight, and only withdraw if they were unsuccessful.[30] The emperor supported Chao as his own position was at stake and this was one of the rare occasions when Kao-tsung adopted an aggressive posture towards the enemy.[31] Nevertheless, even though the Sung troops succeeded in defeating the enemy forces in 11th/1134, the latter continued to harass the Sung until 1137.[32]

The period between 9th/1134 and 11th/1137 saw the ascendancy of the war faction at court, when Chao Ting and Chang Chün served successively as chief councillors. However, the war policy which

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29. SSPM, ch.67, p.690.

30. CYYL, ch.80, p.1313.

31. Kao-tsung moved north from Lin-an臨安 to P'ing-chiang平江 and even intended crossing the Yang-tzu to fight the enemy personally but was advised against doing so by Chao Ting, who, though pro-war, was also cautious. See SSPM, ch.67, p.692.

32. See Lin Jui-hun林瑞翰, "Chien-yen Ming-chou chih-chan chi Shao-hsing Sung yü Wei-ch'i chih-chan"建炎明州之戰及紹興宋與偽齊之戰, Ta-lu tsa-chih大陸雜誌, Vol.11, No.12 (December 1955), pp.18-23.

had been pursued by the court since the end of 1134 gradually changed to one of peace. This was especially true after the dethronement of Liu Yü by the Chin in late 1137,[33] which removed the greatest hindrance to peace negotiations. The defeat of the allied forces of Chin and Ch'i by the Sung in 1134 and 1136 probably made the Jurchen realize that it was impossible for them to conquer the south and that they should seek peace instead. Indeed, with the help of a group of able generals, the Southern Sung was able to put up a gallant defence against its enemy. Its recent victories gave it a better bargaining position with the Chin and both sides appeared keen to negotiate. In 12th/1137 the envoy to Chin, Wang Lun 王倫, returned with the encouraging news that the Jurchen were willing to return to the Sung the imperial coffin of Hui-tsung, who had died in captivity in 4th/1135. They were also willing to release the Empress Dowager Wei 韋 (Kao-tsung's mother) and restore various prefectures in Ho-nan to Sung.[34] It is interesting to note that Ch'in-tsung's return was not mentioned as both sides apparently tried to avoid the issue. On the one hand, Kao-tsung did not desire his brother's return, while the Jurchen, undoubtedly aware of Kao-tsung's fear, tried to make the best bargain out of the peace negotiations by retaining Ch'in-tsung and using him as a threat when

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33. SSPM, ch.67, p.6969.

34. CYYL, ch.117, p.1894. The willingness of the Jurchen to return various areas in Ho-nan to Sung has been attributed to the fact that they were unable to keep the territories under their control. See Anonymous, Chung-hsing yü-wu lu 中興禦侮錄 (YWL), in Yüeh-ya-t'ang ts'ung-shu 粵雅堂叢書, No.13 (Taipei: Hua-wen shu-chü 華文書局, 1965), ch.1, p.3a.

necessary.[35] In any case, Kao-tsung was pleased with this new development and sent Wang Lun on another mission to the Chin court.

With this change in Kao-tsung's attitude, Ch'in Kuei again came to power, being appointed Right Chief Councillor in 3rd/1138. This again gave rise to the existence of two factions at court - a peace faction led by Ch'in Kuei and a war faction led by Left Chief Councillor Chao Ting. The struggle between these two groups ended with Chao's dismissal in 10th/1138. This also brought an end to the period of uncertainty, for with Ch'in Kuei as the sole chief councillor and with Kao-tsung determined to pursue negotiations with the Chin, a definite policy in favour of peace was finally adopted. Also, by 1138 the element of uncertainty was further reduced with the establishment of the Southern Sung capital in Lin-an (Hang-chou) which remained the permanent capital for the rest of the dynasty.[36] Lin-an, being further south and close to the sea, was able to provide Kao-tsung with greater security. Economically, it was also an ideal site as it was easily accessible to the rich resources of the lower Yang-tzu region. The choice of Lin-an as capital also symbolised the triumph of the peace faction, as most of the war advocates were in favour of moving further north to the more exposed but strategically important Chien-k'ang 建康 (modern Nanking

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35. After the dethronement of Liu Yü, there were rumours that the Jurchen intended to make use of Ch'in-tsung as a new puppet ruler. See SSPM, ch.72, p.750.

36. Li Hsin-ch'uan 李心傳, Chien-yen i-lai ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi 建炎以來朝野雜記 (CYTC) (Taipei:Wen-hai, 1967), Vol.I, ch.5, pp.1b-2b.

南京).[37] By choosing Lin-an, Kao-tsung indicated clearly that he had opted for peace and security rather than the uncertainty of war. In the course of the next few years the emperor moved towards achieving complete security by ending the war and by curtailing the power of the military. He finally managed to find someone who was willing to carry out these formidable tasks for him, namely, Ch'in Kuei.

The Chief Councillorship of Ch'in Kuei

Ch'in Kuei served as the sole chief councillor from 10th/1138 until he fell fatally ill in 10th/1155, and the extent of his influence can be measured in part by his seventeen consecutive years in office. During the first few years of his chief councillorship, when his position was still not very stable, Ch'in made use of the censorial officials to consolidate his power at court, first by appointing his own men to censorial positions, and then bringing about a purge of the remnants of the war faction with the help of these same officials.[38] Ch'in's actions naturally led to protests by his opponents, but they went unheeded by the emperor who wanted peace negotiations with the Jurchen carried out smoothly. These

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37. It should be pointed out, however, that among the war advocates, Chao Ting was in favour of making Lin-an the capital, as opposed to Chang Chün and other members of the war faction, who were in favour of moving to Chien-k'ang. See CYTC, Vol.1, ch.5, p.2b; SSPM, ch.63, pp.652-53.

38. Ch'in Kuei had been advised by the Drafting Official of the Secretariat, Kuo-lung Ju-yüan 勾龍如淵, to appoint censorial officials to get rid of all opponents of the peace party. Subsequently Ch'in appointed him Executive Censor in 11th/1138 for this purpose. See CYYL, ch.123, p.1996; biography of Kuo-lung Ju-yüan, SS, ch.380, p.11718.

negotiations had some initial success in 1138-1139, when a tentative agreement was reached in which the Jurchen agreed to return certain Sung territories, Hui-tsung's coffin, and Empress Wei in exchange for Sung acknowledgement of their suzerainty and the payment of an annual subsidy.[39] However, the temporary peace was broken in 1140, when an internal power struggle at the Chin court led to the ascendancy of the war faction headed by Wu Chu 兀朮 who renewed hostilities against the Sung.[40] This sudden change might have expected to result in Ch'in Kuei's downfall. Nevertheless, he was permitted to remain in his post and was even given a second chance to bring about a more permanent peace settlement the following year.

In 5th/1140 the Chin forces led by Wu Chu began their southern invasion and were able to recapture the territories in Ho-nan which had earlier been restored to Sung. But as they moved further south, they encountered stiff resistance from the Sung armies, which were even able to launch counter-offensives into enemy-held territories. The young general Yüeh Fei was especially noted for several victorious campaigns against the enemy. In one of his campaigns in 7th/1140, Yüeh was able to penetrate into southern Ho-nan, within striking distance of the old capital K'ai-feng.[41] However, at this critical juncture, Yüeh was forced to

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39. See SSPM, ch.72, pp.741-751 for the negotiations of the temporary peace.

40. Hsü Meng-hsin 徐夢莘, San-ch'ao pei-meng hui-pien 三朝北盟會編 (PMHP) (Taipei: Wen-hai, 1962), ch.197, pp.6a-6b; and ch.200, pp.4a-5a.

41. SSPM, ch.70, p.722.

retreat by repeated orders from the court. Kao-tsung was keen to end the war and regarded the improved military situation as the opportune moment to sue for peace. On their part, the Jurchen, having encountered serious difficulties in their invasion, were also willing to come to an agreement. The border situation became more stable with the withdrawal of the Chin forces north of the Huai in 3rd/1141.[42]

The prospects of peace being bright, the court decided that it was time to do something about its own generals. Ever since the founding of the Southern Sung, leading generals such as Han Shih-chung, Chang Chün and Yüeh Fei had held great military power, and the soldiers came to be loyal to them rather than to the court.[43] Having little actual military power of his own, Kao-tsung had dealt cautiously with the generals, allowing them to take over some local financial resources and even overlooking the fact that they sometimes disregarded orders from the court and failed to maintain discipline among the troops. Nevertheless the great power enjoyed by the military was a drastic departure from the dynastic tradition and it naturally led to protests by the civilian bureaucracy.[44]

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42. Ibid., ch.72, p.754.

43. This could be seen from the fact that the early Southern Sung armies were all known by the names of the leading generals. See Ting Ch'uan-ching 丁傳靖 comp., Sung-jen i-shih hui-pien 宋人軼事彙編 (SJIS) (Taipei: Shang-wu yin-shu kuan 商務印書館, 1966 reprint), ch.15, p.723.

44. One of the most vigorous attacks against the generals came from the Reviewing Policy Adviser Wang Ts'ao 汪藻 in 1st/1130. See CYYL, ch.31, pp.605-6.

The emperor himself was anxious to bring the generals under control. However, he was careful not to carry out any drastic reforms as long as he needed the service of the generals. However, once the regime approached stability and the external threat subsided, Kao-tsung decided to bring the armies and the generals under control. In this he had the support of the civilian ministers, who regarded the military leaders as a greater menace to the security of the empire than the Jurchen armies.[45] From the political standpoint of the court, it was essential to reduce the power of the military so as to give unquestioned authority to the central government and ultimately to reestablish civilian supremacy over the armies.

Ch'in Kuei took up this responsibility and accomplished the potentially dangerous task with great skill. In 4th/1141 the three leading generals - Han Shih-chung, Chang Chün and Yüeh Fei were summoned to court ostensibly to receive rewards for their recent victories over the enemy. Upon their arrival they were promoted to be military commissioners, while imperial orders were immediately sent to their former lieutenants, appointing each to a separate command over his own unit, with the additional privilege of reporting directly to the court.[46] In this way, the three generals were thus deprived of their military power and their armies placed under the

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45. According to Wang Ts'ao, "(These generals) are usually arrogant and recalcitrant. They refuse to follow the rules and regulations of the court. Wherever they go they will oppress and plunder (the people), and they bring more harm than the foreign invaders...." Wang even said that according to the old law, all the generals deserved to be sentenced to death. See ibid.

46. CYYL, ch.140, pp.2247-8; see also James T.C. Liu, "Yüeh Fei ....," p.293.

control of the central government. Of the three, Chang Chün submitted willingly and was richly rewarded for his cooperation.[47] Han Shih-chung was less willing to comply, but he too submitted, and was left alone to enjoy a retired life on the Western Lake.[48] The most stubborn among them was Yüeh Fei, who did not conceal his dissatisfaction. His defiance merely played into the hands of Ch'in Kuei. In the winter of 1141 Yüeh was suddenly imprisoned on a trumped-up charge of insubordination and high treason,[49] which subsequently led to his unjust death in prison in 12th/1141.

The refusal of Yüeh to cooperate willingly was, however, not the only reason for his tragic fate. What proved fatal was that Yüeh had incurred the displeasure of Kao-tsung and caused the emperor to suspect him of disloyalty. Yüeh had offended the emperor on more than one occasion. In 2nd/1137 he attempted to influence the imperial decision regarding the heir-apparent. Kao-tsung's displeasure was obvious when he rebuffed Yüeh with the statement that being a military official, he had no right to interfere in such matters.[50] The emperor's displeasure was compounded by

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47. Chang Chün received much wealth for himself and obtained local government posts for his former subordinates. See biography of Chang Chün, SS, ch.369, p.11475; Pi Yüan 畢沅, Hsü Tzu-chih t'ung-chien 續資治通鑑 (HTC) (Peking: Ku-chi ch'u-pan-she 古籍出版社, 1957), ch.124, p.3824.

48. HTC, ch.124, p.3295.

49. Yüeh was accused of being involved in a conspiracy to stage a rebellion with his former subordinates in Hsiang-yang. CHSC, ch.27, pp.16b-17a and p.20a.

50. CYYL, ch.109, p.1764.

suspicion when it was reported that Yüeh had close connection with Chao Shih-nio 趙士㒟, a remote member of the imperial clan.[51] Also, despite his general tolerance towards the generals, Kao-tsung could not but feel uneasy about the great amount of wealth accumulated by Yüeh in his army. Through various commercial activities such as the sale of wine and the establishment of a trading market, Yüeh is said to have stored 20 million min 緡 (strings of cash) in his army. It is therefore not surprising that as soon as he was dismissed, the emperor ordered a thorough investigation of the finances in Yüeh's army and restored its trading profits to the central government.[52]

Meanwhile, peace negotiations between Sung and Chin took on a quicker pace after 9th/1141 and reached a successful conclusion before the end of the year. The Huai River became the new boundary in the eastern borders. In addition, the Sung agreed to pay an annual tribute of 250,000 taels of silver and 250,000 bolts of silk and to declare themselves vassals (ch'en 臣) of the Chin. They were further obliged neither to encourage the migration of refugees from North China nor to support the rebel activities of Sung loyalists there. In return, the Chin promised to return the imperial coffin of Hui-tsung and also send back Kao-tsung's mother.[53] The

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51. Ibid., ch.142, p.2290.

52. CHSC, ch.27, p.16b.

53. SSPM, ch.72, pp.755-56; see also Herbert Franke, "Treaties Between Sung and Chin," in Etudes Song, Series I (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1970), pp.55-84.

treaty established a pattern of coexistence between the two rival powers which was to endure in its essential form for almost a century.

From the signing of the above treaty, it is clear that Kao-tsung regarded the achievement of internal stability as more important than the complete restoration of the former empire. In his opinion the call for hui-fu was not only impractical but also impossible at the time.[54] On the other hand, there were ample benefits to be gained from the peace agreement. There would be no more loss of innocent lives and with the return of the Empress Dowager and Hui-tsung's coffin, the emperor would be commended for his filiality. As for the humiliating terms involved in the agreement, this was taken care of by Ch'in Kuei, who, in order to protect the imperial image, assumed total responsibility for the peace policy and all the blame that accompanied it. For his loyalty to the emperor, Ch'in was richly rewarded by Kao-tsung, who not only granted him great honour and prestige but also delegated so much authority to him that he became the most powerful bureaucrat in the court of early Southern Sung.

With the successful conclusion of peace, Ch'in Kuei's position became even more secure. A month after the return of Empress Dowager Wei in 8th/1142, Kao-tsung indicated his appreciation to Ch'in by raising his honorific rank to that of Senior Preceptor (t'ai-shih 太師) and enfeoffing him as Duke of Wei (Wei Kuo-Kung 魏國公).[55] No minister since Ts'ai Ching had received

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54. See CHSC, ch.27, pp.10b-11a.

55. Ibid., ch.28, pp.14a-14b.

similarly high rank. In the ensuing years the emperor continued to heap honours on Ch'in. In 4th/1145 Ch'in received further promotion in rank; he was also given a new house and presented with valuable gifts of money and goods.[56] In 6th/1145 Kao-tsung even paid Ch'in the honour of a personal visit to his new house and conferred high honorific ranks on the women of his family and official titles on his grandsons.[57] His adopted son Ch'in Hsi 秦熺 also rose in rank and influence in court. The emperor's ties with Ch'in became even closer with the marriage between Ch'in's grand-daughter and the younger brother of Empress Wu 吳, Kao-tsung's consort.[58] The emperor and his chief councillor appear to have maintained extremely cordial relations throughout the latter's seventeen years in office.

Having gained the emperor's confidence, Ch'in Kuei began to tighten his grip over the bureaucracy. Prior to the signing of the peace agreement, the majority of the officials purged by Ch'in were people who were opposed to the peace policy. However, from 1142 onwards, even those who belonged to the peace faction became vulnerable. For example, Ho Chu 何鑄, a chief negotiator of the peace agreement, was made to leave in 8th/1142. Ho was able to gain the emperor's favour because of his successful peace mission and this naturally put Ch'in on his guard. It was probably because of his fear of Ho's rise to power to rival his own position that Ch'in

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56. CYYL, ch.153, p.2468.

57. Ibid., ch.153, p.2474.

58. Biography of Wu I 吳益, SS, ch.465, p.13591.

instigated the censorial officials to impeach Ho and to bring about his dismissal soon after the latter's return from Chin.[59] Also, in 2nd/1144 the Second Privy Councillor Mo-ch'i Hsieh 万俟卨, a former collaborator of Ch'in, was hounded out of office when he began to show signs of excessive independence.[60] Indeed, Ch'in became increasingly intolerant of those who disagreed with him and was in constant fear that his immediate subordinates would develop adequate strength to challenge his position of dominance. Consequently, he did not allow any of his assistant councillors to remain long at their posts, many of them being dismissed after having been in office for only a year or less. To remove officials who had become a threat or who were no longer in his favour, Ch'in regularly turned to the censorial organ for assistance. In turn the censorial officials were rewarded with promotion to high positions in the bureaucracy, often replacing the same individuals they had earlier impeached. In this way, many censorial officials willingly became instruments of the chief councillor because of their ambition to climb the bureaucratic ladder. Besides using the censorial organ, Ch'in Kuei also exerted his control over the bureaucracy by his personnel policy. It is said that the assistant councillors he recommended were mostly mediocre men who could be easily controlled.[61]

Ch'in Kuei was also vigilant against the revival of the war faction. Though many of the active war advocates were in exile they

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59. CYYL, ch.146, p.2340.

60. Ibid., ch.151, p.2427.

61. Ibid., ch.127, pp.3366-67.

remained potentially influential. Among them were Ch'in's old enemies Chang Chün and Chao Ting. In 7th/1146 Chang Chün was further demoted and exiled to a more distant place in Lien-chou 連州 (in Kuang-tung 廣東) for having sent a memorial urging the emperor to speed up his war efforts.[62] In 8th/1147 Ch'in even hounded Chao Ting to death in his place of exile.[63] Seeing Chao as a potential rival to himself, Ch'in found it necessary to eliminate him totally. Even after Chao's death many possible sympathisers of his were also persecuted. In 11th/1148 another prominent war advocate, Hu Ch'üan 胡銓, had his place of exile shifted to a more remote location,[64] and in 8th/1150 Chang Chün was again moved further to a new place of exile.[65]

Ch'in appears to have grown more and more suspicious of subversion against himself, not only from former war advocates but also from the scholar-officials in general. In early 1150 eight officials and former officials were implicated in the alleged circulation of a private history composed by an ex-councillor in exile, Li Kuang 李光, and recorded by his son, Li Meng-chien 李孟堅. Li was accused of criticizing the Ch'in regime in his work.

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62. HTC, ch.127, pp.3366-67.

63. It is said that Ch'in ordered the local officials stationed at Chao's place of exile to report monthly on whether Chao was still alive or dead. On hearing this, Chao told his son that it was Ch'in's intention to see him dead, and the only way to save his family from harm was by giving up his own life. So he deliberately starved himself to death. Ibid., ch.127, pp.3374-75.

64. Ibid., ch.128, p.3396.

65. Ibid., ch.129, p.3411.

As a result he was barred from future official appointment, his son was exiled and the others were all demoted in rank.[66] In 11th/1151 a member of the civil service was publicly executed for defaming the administration.[67] The persecutions continued over the next few years, and resulted in the purging and exile of many more officials from court. These included relatives and friends of prominent men as well as those who were merely suspected of being disloyal to the chief councillor. The persecutions of political dissidents culminated in 1155, when fifty-three men including Chao Ting's son, Chao Fen 趙汾, Chang Chün, Li Kuang and others were implicated in a case of alleged sedition. However, the case did not bear fruit as Ch'in became increasingly ill and was unable to bring his accusations against them.[68] Even till his very last days, therefore, Ch'in was on his guard against those who refused to fall in line with him.

Ch'in Kuei's "reign of terror" naturally made him very unpopular. His lack of popularity could also have been caused by his amassing great wealth for himself.[69] Furthermore, his blatant nepotism in placing his son and grandsons in high positions might

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66. CYYL, ch.161, p.2604, pp.2607-8.

67. Ibid., ch.162, p.2647.

68. Ibid., ch.169, p.2769.

69. It is reported that the annual presents Ch'in received from the officials of both the central and local governments amounted to hundreds of thousands and that his private wealth, accumulated through imperial favours and gifts from ingratiating bureaucrats, was several times more than that of the tso-tsang 左藏 or National Treasury, see CYYL, ch.169, p.2772; HTC, ch.130, p.3459.

have also led to resentment on the part of Kao-tsung. In 3rd/1148 Ch'in Hsi was appointed Administrator of the Military Bureau; this was obviously a move to pave the way for him to succeed his father. Though Ch'in Hsi gave up his post the following month, he remained effectively second in power only to his father.[70] Since there was no indication of any direct opposition in court against Hsi's appointment, it could well be that he was obliged to step down from his newly-acquired position because of the disapproval of the emperor. Indeed, in the later years of Ch'in's chief councillorship, there were signs that Kao-tsung was beginning to feel uneasy about Ch'in's behaviour. In 3rd/1154 it is said that Ch'in Kuei intended to have his grandson Ch'in Hsün 秦塤 placed first in the palace examinations but the emperor decided to place him third instead.[71] In 10th/1155, when Ch'in Kuei was on his death-bed, Ch'in Hsi attempted to influence the imperial decision in making him his father's successor.[72] Though Kao-tsung had supported Ch'in Kuei to the last, he was nevertheless unwilling to allow his son to succeed him. After visiting Ch'in and realizing that he was dying, the emperor dismissed both him and his son.

Immediately after Ch'in's death in 10th/1155, Kao-tsung rapidly reestablished his authority over the government. A vigorous purge of Ch'in Kuei's faction was carried out with the help of the censorial organ, which resumed its role as the "ears and eyes" of the emperor. In the appointment of councillors, there was a return

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70. HTC, ch.128, pp.3381-82.

71. CYYL, ch.166, pp.2712-13.

72. Ibid., ch.169, p.2770.

to the old pattern where bureaucratic turnover at the chief ministerial level was remarkably high. In less than eight years from late 1155 to the time of Kao-tsung's retirement in 1162, five chief councillors were appointed, in contrast to the period of Ch'in Kuei's domination, when there had been only one chief councillor in more than seventeen years.

It is interesting to note that many of the councillors appointed after Ch'in's death had had previous connections with him. Even though some of them might have fallen out of Ch'in Kuei's favour, they were still men who had served under him and assisted him in building up his power. It is ironical that on the one hand, there was a purge of the so-called "faction" of Ch'in Kuei, while on the other hand, many who had rendered services to Ch'in continued to find their way into government service, with full consent from the emperor. By allowing the service of men who had adhered to Ch'in's policy, the emperor was able to maintain the same government policies pursued by Ch'in formerly. Kao-tsung's attitude was clearly indicated in 12th/1155 when he told the ministers that although the peace policy had been firmly upheld by the now discredited Ch'in Kuei, they too had supported it and should continue to adhere to it.[73] On another occasion, in 3rd/1156, when there were rumours regarding the possibility of a Chin invasion, the emperor proclaimed that it was his intention to pursue peace and that Ch'in's death by no means led to an end of this policy.[74] However, despite his strict

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73. Ibid., ch.170, p.2740.

74. Ibid., ch.172, p.2827.

adherence to observe peace, Kao-tsung was eventually forced to take up arms against the Jurchen, who renewed their hostilities against the Sung and invaded the Southern Sung empire in 1161.

Renewal of Sung-Chin Hostilities

After the conclusion of the peace settlement between Sung and Chin in 1141, peaceful coexistence between the two states lasted for nearly twenty years. It was an uneasy peace, however (especially during the late 1150s), and was finally broken by another war in 1161. This was the second and final attempt by the Jurchen to cross the Yang-tzu with the intention of eliminating the Southern Sung; and like the first attempt, it ended in failure.

The Jurchen forces on this occasion were led by Wan-yen Liang 完顏亮 who was later given the posthumous title of Prince Hai-ling (Hai-ling Wang 海陵王).[75] In 1149 Hai-ling had usurped the throne from his cousin, Emperor Hsi-tsung 熙宗 (r. 1136-1149), and after his accession, he continued to exchange envoys with the Sung. Nevertheless, he harboured the ambition to conquer the Sung and in 2nd/1159 declared his intention to invade Chinese territory.[76] Two years later, he moved the capital to K'ai-feng, and from there launched his southern campaign against the Sung.

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75. The official biography of Hai-ling is found in T'o T'o, Chin shih 金史 (CS) (Peking: Chung-hua, 1975), ch.5, pp.91-118. For a study of his invasion of Southern Sung, see T'ao Jing-shen 陶晉生, 'Chin Hai-ling-ti ti fa-Sung yü Ts'ai-shih chan-i ti k'ao-shih 金海陵帝的伐宋與采石戰役的考實, Kuo-li T'ai-wan ta-hsueh wen-shih ts'ung-k'an 國立台灣大學文史叢刊 (Taipei: Taiwan University, 1963).

76. Biography of Hai-ling, CS, ch.5, p.110.

The Southern Sung forces were hardly prepared to go to war at this time. After twenty years of coexistence with the enemy, both the army and the populace had grown accustomed to the peace and tranquility which had been brought by the settlement of 1141. Since the soldiers were not engaged in fighting, many had been forced to perform other duties by the generals to increase the latter's income. One result of the rapid commercialization of the time was that many military men became traders; they were more interested in building up their own businesses rather than training the soldiers for war.[77] A criticism of the military put forward by the Minister of Personnel, Wang Ying-ch'en 汪應辰 in late 1161 revealed many weaknesses that existed in the Sung army:

> Ever since the conclusion of the peace settlement, the generals have been able to enjoy riches and honour; their easy and luxurious living had made them proud and lazy, and caused them to lose their fighting spirit. Even though many soldiers have been recruited, they have not been given proper training. Instead, they are forced to do the work of artisans, merchants or labourers.... It is well-known that such soldiers are not able to fight. Therefore, on the arrival of the enemy, they fled without a fight....[78]

Thus despite the heavy expenses incurred by the military which amounted to 80% of the national expenditure,[79] Sung forces were

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77. This was pointed out by the Right Policy Critic Adviser, Ho P'u 何溥, who in his criticism of the army in 3rd/1161, mentioned that instead of training the soldiers, the generals were engaged in commercial pursuits, and that within twenty years, many military men had turned into traders. See CYYL, ch.189, p.3155.

78. See Wang Ying-ch'en 汪應辰, Wen-ting chi 文定集 (Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng 叢書集成 TSCC, ed.), ch.2, p.15.

79. In 12th/1160 Kao-tsung mentioned that 80% of the national income was spent on the army. See CYYL, ch.187, p.3131.

unable to stop the advance of the Jurchen, who arrived on the northern banks of the Yang-tzu in less than a month.

Sung military efforts were further handicapped by the general apathy of the court toward defence and war preparations. Although news concerning the Chin intentions to invade was received as early as 1156, the emperor and his ministers preferred to treat this as mere rumours and refused to countenance any suggestion they should prepare for war. In 3rd/1156, a Chin-shih degree holder from the north who had managed to escape to Sung territory, Liang Hsün 梁勛, was even exiled for memorializing about the possibility of a Chin invasion.[80] During the late 1150s Sung envoys to Chin also began voicing their suspicions about the Jurchen intention to invade Chinese territory, but they too went unheeded by the court. For example, in 2nd/1158, the Junior Lord of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices (t'ai-ch'ang shao-ch'ing 太常少卿), Sun Tao-fu 孫道夫, who had recently returned from the Jurchen court, reported that the Chin had made provoking accusations about Sung violations of the peace treaty.[81] Although it was apparent that the Jurchen were actually seeking an excuse to invade, the Sung did not respond positively to this report. In 4th/1159 the Vice-Director of Education (kuo-tzu ssu-yeh 國子司業) Huang Chung 黃中 returned from the north with news that the Jurchen were rebuilding the

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80. Ibid., ch.172, p.2827.

81. The Jurchen had questioned Liang about the change in Sung attitude after Ch'in Kuei's death, and about the acceptance of illegal immigrants from Chin and the acquisition of horses by the Sung. See HTC, ch.132, 3494.

palaces in K'ai-feng, a sign that they were preparing to move the capital there. Huang called upon the emperor to prepare for the possibility of an invasion. However, his statement was immediately challenged by Chief Councillors Shen Kai 沈該 and T'ang Ssu-t'ui 湯思退,[82] and this and other requests to carry out defence preparations were ignored. The reluctance of the Sung to go into war at this time was later aptly described by the Librarian of the Imperial Library, Wang Shih-p'eng 王十朋 :

> When news concerning the possibility of an enemy invasion was received, the officials were all frightened and spread the rumours round; however, when such reports subsided, they thought peace would reign again. Furthermore, they talked about the enemy being faced with their own internal problems and said that they would not invade our country after all. Instead of preparing for the eventuality of war, they were hoping against hope that the enemy would be obstructed by their internal problems; this was poor planning indeed![83]

By the summer of 1160, however, the threat of foreign invasion could no longer be ignored. In 5th/1160, the Co-Administrator of the Military Bureau Yeh I-wen 葉義問 returned from Chin with news that the Jurchen were continuing to rebuild K'ai-feng and preparing their battle-ships, developments which he felt clearly showed their intention to invade. At this stage, even Kao-tsung, who had all along dismissed such reports as unfounded, had to agree. Therefore, when the Right Chief Councillor Ch'en K'ang-po 陳康伯 presented his plans for the defence of the Liang-Huai

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82. CYYL, ch.181, p.3011.

83. Wang Shih-p'eng 王十朋, Mei-ch'i hsien-sheng wen-chi 梅溪先生文集 (MCC) (Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an 四部叢刊 SPTK ed.), "tsou-i" 奏議, ch.2, p.1a.

兩淮 region, the emperor promptly accepted them.[84] Nevertheless, even when it became clear that war was likely, Kao-tsung still hoped to maintain the status quo and thus defence preparations were carried out only half-heartedly.

It was only after the visit by the Chin envoys in 5th/1161 that the Sung began to take more positive action in preparing for war. On this occasion, apart from their nominal mission to congratulate Kao-tsung on his birthday, the enemy also announced the death of Ch'in-tsung, and more importantly, put forward a demand that a new border be drawn up between Sung and Chin. Hai-ling conveyed his message through the envoys that he was dissatisfied with the current border along the Huai River because of the large number of illegal immigrants crossing in both directions, and demanded that the Sung send ministers to K'ai-feng to negotiate about the demarcation of a new border.[85] The Chin emperor was actually demanding the territory of the Huai region and this was naturally unacceptable to the Sung. In fact, by making such demands, the Jurchen were trying to provoke Sung into hostilities so that they could have an excuse to invade. Kao-tsung immediately ordered his ministers to hold meetings to discuss preparations for war, an order which was promptly obeyed.

The prospect of an imminent Chin invasion led to some confusion at the Sung court. The eunuch Chang Ch'ü-wei 張去為 tried to persuade the emperor to abandon his war efforts and plan instead to retreat. There were even rumours that the emperor was

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84. CYYL, ch.185, p.3099.

85. Ibid., ch.190, pp.3172-73.

planning, if necessary, to go to either Fu-chien 福建 or Ssu-ch'uan.[86] And, indeed, even while preparations for war were in hand, arrangements for retreat were being planned. In fact, Kao-tsung apparently was prepared to flee to the sea should it be necessary.[87]

Meanwhile, Hai-ling had already moved to K'ai-feng and was making final preparations for his invasion, which began in 9th/1161. The Chin forces attacked the Sung from several directions, with the main army being led by Hai-ling himself. In the western borders of Shensi and Ssu-ch'uan, the enemy faced gallant resistance from the Sung army led by Wu Lin 吳璘.[88] The Chin navy was also defeated in Shan-tung by the Sung naval commander Li Pao 李寶, who had earlier lifted the siege at Hai-chou 海州 (modern Tung-hai hsien 東海縣 in Chiang-su 江蘇).[89] The major threat, however, came from the main army, which did manage to cross the Huai and capture a large part of the southern Huai region by late 10th/1161. The Sung generals Wang Ch'üan 王權 and Liu Ch'i 劉琦, who had been assigned the defence of the Huai region, both suffered defeats and retreated.[90]

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86. Ibid., ch.190, p.3175.

87. This was pointed out by a scholar without rank (pu-i 布衣) Ho Sung-ying 何宋英, who in his memorial in 6th/1161, criticized that at this critical juncture, the national funds were spent on building the imperial boats in preparation for fleeing to the sea to escape from enemy attacks. See PMHP, ch.227, pp.1a-4a.

88. See biography of Wu Lin, SS, ch.366, pp.11417-18.

89. Hai-chou had been ceded to the Chin in the 1141 treaty but it was recaptured by Sung loyalists in 8th/1161. See CYYL, ch.192, p.3207.

90. Ibid., ch.193, pp.3241-42.

Soon after the Chin invasion began, Kao-tsung issued a decree calling upon all officials to take up the responsibility of fighting the enemy.[91] However, when news concerning the defeat of the Sung forces in the Huai region was received, the court once again was seized with panic. Kao-tsung summoned his ministers and told them of his intention to disperse the officials and take to the sea. This was again firmly opposed by Chief Councillor Ch'en K'ang-po, while the ex-general Yang Ts'un-chung 楊存中 also promised to fight the enemy to the end. Consequently, the emperor changed his mind and even declared his intention to lead the army personally.[92]

In 11th/1161 the Sung was in a most dangerous situation for the Chin troops were preparing to cross the Yang-tzu at any moment. With the fall of Kua-chou 瓜州 (south of Yang-chou on the northern banks of the Yang-tzu) on 4/11th/1161,[93] the whole of the southern Huai region fell into enemy hands. To the west, Wang Ch'üan had earlier crossed to the southern side of the Yang-tzu and stationed his troops at Ts'ai-shih 采石 (on the southern banks of the lower Yang-tzu south-west of Chien-k'ang). The court then decided to dismiss Wang and replace him with Li Hsien-chung 李顯忠, who was stationed at Wu-hu 蕪湖 further west. While Wang Ch'üan was recalled, the Drafting Official of the Imperial Secretariat Yü Yün-wen 虞允文, who had been appointed Consultant of Military Affairs

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91. Ibid., ch.193, p.3229.

92. HTC, ch.135, p.3577.

93. PMHP, ch.238, pp.5a-6a.

(ts'an-mo chun-shih 參謀軍事) the previous month, was sent to inform Li Hsien-chung to take over Wang's army, and at the same time reward the soldiers at Ts'ai-shih.[94] After seeing Li at Wu-hu, Yü left for Ts'ai-shih where he found the remnants of Wang Ch'üan's army scattered along the road. Yü informed them that they would soon have a new general, Li Hsien-chung, but before Li's arrival, he would personally lead them. He also promised to reward them richly, and the morale of the troops is said to have been raised. On 8/10th/1161 Yü organized the troops for battle by lining up both the cavalry and infantry along the banks while warships were sent down the river to attack the advancing enemy. The Chin forces were taken by surprise, and because of the superiority of the Sung boats and the superior skills of the Chinese in naval and river warfare, the latter were able to inflict heavy casualties upon the Jurchen units.[95]

After this defeat at Ts'ai-shih, Hai-ling withdrew his forces to Yang-chou, where preparations were made for a second attempt to cross the Yang-tzu. It should be pointed out that prior to the battle at Ts'ai-shih, Hai-ling had received news that during his absence from home, an uprising had taken place resulting in the usurpation of his throne by a member of the royal family, Wan-yen Yung 完顏雍 (Emperor Shih-tsung 世宗).[96] Although much disturbed by this event, Hai-ling decided to continue with his

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94. HTC, ch.135, p.3587.

95. For a detailed account of the battle at Ts'ai-shih, see CYYL, ch.194, pp.3260-70; PMHP, ch.238, pp.10a-14b.

96. See CS, ch.5, p.116; ch.6, pp.122-3.

southern campaign instead of returning home immediately, probably in a desperate move to prove his strength. However, the disaster at Ts'ai-shih greatly frustrated him and demoralised his army, and when he ordered his generals to cross the Yang-tzu a second time, they turned against him and pledged their loyalty to the new ruler. Consequently, on 27/11th/1161, Hai-ling and several of his ministers were murdered by their own troops.[97]

Following these developments the Chin forces withdrew to the north. Even though the war had not officially ended and heavy fighting was to continue for several more months, the major threat posed by the enemy had been removed. Seeing that the conditions were now more favourable to the Sung, Kao-tsung and the imperial entourage left for Chien-k'ang in 12th/1161. After a brief visit in 1st/1162, the emperor was satisfied with conditions there and decided to return to Lin-an although he had been urged to stay on in Chien-k'ang to direct the war effort from there.[98] Meanwhile the Chin had sent envoys to officially inform the Sung about the accession of the new emperor. Both sides were keen to negotiate for peace, and while intermittent warfare continued along the border for the rest of the year, envoys were sent to and fro between the two states in an attempt to reach a satisfactory settlement.

While it is clear that the failure of the Jurchen campaign was largely caused by their internal problems, it is quite possible that if they had defeated the Sung army at Ts'ai-shih and crossed the Yang-tzu, Hai-ling might have succeeded in conquering the Sung after all. The Sung victory at Ts'ai-shih was therefore highly

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97. CYYL, ch.194, pp.3280-81.

98. Ibid., ch.196, pp.3309-10.

significant as it was crucial to the continued existence of the empire. It was subsequently much glorified and Yü Yün-wen was celebrated as a national hero.[99]

The Chin invasion of 1161 was soon followed by another important political event: the abdication of Kao-tsung. After returning to Lin-an in 2nd/1162, the emperor decided that it was time for him to retire. Subsequently, in a formal abdication ceremony in 6th/1162, Kao-tsung handed over the reins of power to his chosen heir, Hsiao-tsung.

Kao-tsung's Role as a Dynastic Founder

In his long reign of thirty-five years, Kao-tsung had gone through two major wars and encountered numerous crises which made his position as emperor far from enviable. Furthermore, the strenous duties and heavy responsibilities involved in decision-making under such unstable conditions would have been extremely trying for any ruler. Yet, despite his youth and inexperience at the time of his accession, Kao-tsung was able to overcome the various difficulties and restore the fallen Sung empire by giving it a new life in South China. On the whole, Kao-tsung can be said to have played a significant role as an empire-builder.

In founding the Southern Sung dynasty, Kao-tsung took several steps to ensure his personal supremacy and the supremacy of

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99. Since the battle at Ts'ai-shih was crucial to the fate of the Southern Sung, the victory achieved here has been regarded as a celebrated event and many of the facts have been exaggerated to glorify the battle and its hero, Yü Yün-wen. In fact, neither was the victory such a "glorious" one nor was Yü such a great hero. It was his sheer loyalty and good planning, combined with the familiarity of the Sung with the Yang-tzu and their superior maritime skills that enabled the Sung forces to defeat their enemy. See T'ao Jing-shen, op.cit., pp.127-184.

the central government. First of all he extended the control of the central government inland by suppressing the bandits with the help of the generals. Next he moved against the generals themselves. Being in a vulnerable position because of internal instability and external threat, it took Kao-tsung many years before he finally decided to curtail the power of the military. But he finally did so when peace negotiations were reaching a successful conclusion. By concluding a peace settlement and simultaneously withdrawing the power from the generals, Kao-tsung succeeded in achieving both internal security and restoring civilian supremacy over the military.

Having achieved his goals in restoring peace and internal security, Kao-tsung thus placed his newly-founded dynasty on a firmer footing. Territorially, the borders between Sung and Chin were defined with the River Huai as the major demarcation line. The boundaries remained essentially the same for the rest of the dynasty. With the establishment of Lin-an as the capital, the Southern Sung built up a coastal empire facing inland, an unprecedented event in Chinese history. Southern China, particularly the Yang-tzu region, became the political and socio-economic centre of the Chinese empire.

It has been mentioned earlier that economic consideration was an important factor for the decision of the Southern Sung court to establish its empire in the south-east. Indeed, it cannot be denied that financial resources played a crucial role in the founding of the Southern Sung. Ever since his accession to the throne, Kao-tsung paid special attention to the financial administration of his empire. He was noted for introducing various reforms aimed at increasing the national income. Soon after becoming emperor in 5th/1127, Kao-tsung showed that he recognized the great potential in the tea and salt monopolies by channeling the revenue

from these sources into the court.[100] From the very beginning of the Southern Sung, the tea and salt monopolies contributed greatly to the total income of the empire.[101] Besides tea and salt, wine was also considered an important source of revenue and the wine tax was raised on numerous occasions during Kao-tsung's reign. The income from these three monopolies was truly crucial to the finance of the Southern Sung as it helped to take care of the heavy expenses incurred by the military. As pointed out by Chief Councillor Lü I-hao 呂頤浩 in 10th/1132, "The empire is depending on the monopolies from tea, salt and wine to support the soldiers...."[102]

Apart from the three monopolies mentioned above, the Southern Sung government also derived a considerable proportion of its income from a large number of supplementary taxes. Notable among these were the ching-chih ch'ien 經制錢,[103] first restored

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100. CHSC, ch.1, p.10b

101. After the implementation of the tea and salt reform in 5th/1127, the monopoly office in Chen-chou 真州 (modern I-chen 儀徵 hsien in Chiang-su) was able to receive an annual income of 6 million min. In later years the tea and salt revenue in the south-east rose to 24 million min. See CHSC, ch.3, pp.24b-25a. Considering the fact that the annual cash revenue from the south-east was less than 10 million min at the beginning of Southern Sung and 65.3 million min by the end of Hsiao-tsung's reign, it is evident that the tea and salt monopolies contributed a large percentage to the national income of the Southern Sung empire. For figures on national income during the various periods of Sung rule, see CYTC, Vol.1, ch.14, pp.1a-1b.

102. CYYL, ch.59, p.1025.

103. The ching-chih ch'ien was first introduced during the last years of the Northern Sung but was later abolished. It was re-imposed during the early years of Kao-tsung's reign. It consisted of a variety of indirect taxes such as sales tax on documents, on wine, houses and other income-yielding properties. In the early 13th century, its contribution to the national income amounted to 6.6 million min. See CHSC, ch.6, pp.15a-15b; CYTC, Vol.1, ch.15, pp.3a-3b.

by Kao-tsung in the winter of 1128 but was fully implemented only in late 1129, and the tsung-chih ch'ien 總制錢[104] which was introduced in early 1135. These were mainly indirect taxes imposed upon the people in the south-east. Furthermore, the state also introduced a special tax called the yüeh-chuang ch'ien 月樁錢 in 1132, designated solely for military expenses.[105] Since these were all extra taxes in addition to the regular levy from the "two-tax" system, the burden carried by the people was naturally heavy. Fortunately the abundant resources in the south-east and the rapid commercialization during this period allowed the imposition of such taxes without straining the people to the breaking-point. Kao-tsung's policy of heavy taxation was continued by Ch'in Kuei during the latter's administration.[106] In fact, the policy remained in effect for the duration of the Southern Sung.

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104. The tsung-chih ch'ien represents another series of additional taxes similar to the ching-chih ch'ien mentioned above. Its contribution to the national income amounted to 7.8 million min in the early 13th century. See CHSC, ch.17, pp.17b-18a; CYTC, Vol.1, ch.15, pp.3b-4b. For a study on the importance of the ching-tsung-chih ch'ien see Hisatomi Hisashi 久富壽, "Nan-Sō no zaisei to kei-sō-sei sen" 南宋の財政と經總制錢, Hokudai Shigaku 北大史學, Vol.9 (Sapporo, 1964), pp.32-54.

105. This was introduced by Chief Councillors Lü I-hao and Chu Shen-fei 朱勝非 to meet the heavy military expenses of the time. The money was raised by drawing from various sources such as wine-taxes, tax-income designated for the capital (shang-kung 上供) and the ching-chih ch'ien. While the imposition of this tax led to great hardship among the people in the south-east, it was able to contribute another 4 million min to the national income. See CHSC, ch.14, p.4a; CYTC, Vol.1, ch.14, p.1b and ch.15, pp.7a-8a.

106. It is said that Ch'in Kuei initially found that the empire's income was insufficient, and thus ordered the circuit intendants in the Chiang 江 and Che 浙 region (south-eastern China) to increase the taxes, imposing great burden upon the people. See HTC, ch.130, p.3459.

In addition to the policy of heavy taxation, the government also placed a great deal of emphasis upon the effective collection of revenue in provincial and prefectural administrations. In 7th/1130, in an attempt to encourage prefectural officials to be diligent in their duty of tax-collection, an efficiency-rating system was set up according to the proposal of the Ministry of Finance, whereby the administrators would be rewarded or punished according to their performance in gathering revenue for the central government.[107] In 8th/1141 the circuit intendants and the prefectural administrators were called upon by the emperor to cooperate with each other so that financial administration could be efficiently carried out.[108] Also, in 6th/1143, during Ch'in Kuei's administration, circuit intendants were required to check on the accounts of the prefectural governments and to impeach administrators who failed to keep proper books on the income and expenditure in the prefectures concerned.[109]

Another important measure which was intended to attain greater efficiency in revenue-collection and a fairer distribution of taxes among the rural population was the land survey programme known as ching-chieh fa 經界法. This was proposed by the Division Chief in the Department of Ministries (tso-ssu yüan-wai lang 左司員外郎) Li Ch'un-nien 李椿年 and accepted by the court in 1142.[110] The reform was prompted by the problem of

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107. CYYL, ch.35, p.680.

108. CHSC, ch.27, p.16a.

109. CYYL, ch.149, p.2398.

110. Ibid, ch.147, pp.2365-66.

inaccurate records which led to disorder and confusion in the levying of taxes based on the properties of individual households. Under this reform, maps were drawn and proper registers compiled on the properties of village households so as to remedy the problem of tax evasion and the unequal distribution of local services among the rural population. The system was adopted in most parts of the empire in the 1140s and although it met with opposition from the wealthy landowners in certain areas, it did bring about more equitable taxes in the areas where it was successfully implemented.[111] This system continued to function in different localities throughout most of the rest of the dynasty.

Kao-tsung was noted not only for his concern for financial administration but was also well-known for his efforts in promoting agriculture. Two plots of land in the palace compound were set aside for the cultivation of rice while silkworms were also raised for sericulture.[112] Through the palace farms the emperor was able to monitor the two major agrarian activities of grain-cultivation and sericulture in the country. He would be well-informed as to whether the grain was growing well and would be able to take precautionary measures against poor harvests etc. Besides taking a personal interest in agriculture, Kao-tsung also emphasized the role of prefectural and sub-prefectural officials in encouraging agrarian activities. For example, in 5th/1135, a merit-evaluation

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111. For a study on the ching-chieh fa, see Wang Te-i 王德毅, "Li Ch'un-nien yü Nan-Sung t'u-ti ching-chieh" 李椿年與南宋土地經界 SSYCC, Vol.7 (1974), pp.441-480.

112. CHSC, ch.21, pp.10b-11a.

system was set up for promoting or demoting officials according to their efforts in encouraging farming among the population.[113] The promotion of agriculture was thus seen by the founder as vital to the economic restoration of the war-torn empire.

Institutionally, the major governmental organs were inherited from the Northern Sung but there were certain modifications. With the centralization of the Three Departments under the chief councillor's control, the executive power of the head of the civilian bureaucracy was greatly expanded. Also, because of war, military and economic powers were also assigned to the chief councillor in times of need. Thus Southern Sung chief councillors became generally more powerful than their predecessors. This was especially true during the period of Ch'in Kuei's administration. Although it was Kao-tsung who voluntarily delegated his authority to Ch'in, the dominant feature of court politics during the seventeen years of Ch'in's chief councillorship appears to have been the consolidation of the chief councillor's power rather than the emperor's power. On the other hand, it should be remembered that Ch'in was able to gain Kao-tsung's confidence and sustaining support because of his absolute loyalty to the emperor. In the final analysis, the expansion of the executive power of the chief councillor in turn led to the growth of the absolute authority of the emperor for it was the latter who delegated such executive power to the former. Thus, in general, it can be said that the institutional framework established by Kao-tsung was basically

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113. Ibid., ch.18, p.6b.

founded upon the dynastic traditions of centralization, absolutism and civilian supremacy.

It was in the style of government that the Southern Sung appears to be most innovative. The precarious circumstances in the early part of his political career forced Kao-tsung to adopt the principle of accommodation as the main guideline for his government. He had to accommodate not only the ministers and generals but also the bandits and rebels. It was largely through accommodative politics that Kao-tsung succeeded in stabilizing his regime. In foreign policy too the principle of accommodation served as the governing factor as shown by Kao-tsung's willingness to co-exist with the enemy and to submit to the humiliating terms dictated by the Jurchen. Furthermore, in court politics the emperor was able to consolidate his own position by employing various manipulative techniques and balancing measures based upon the principle of accommodation. In so doing, he set the pattern of Southern Sung politics for succeeding emperors to follow.

Kao-tsung's peace policy and reliance upon Ch'in Kuei brought judgement upon him that disparaged his role as founder of the Southern Sung dynasty.[114] Also, traditional Chinese sources tend to emphasize the weak and timid aspects of Kao-tsung's personality in order to provide an excuse for the humiliating peace concluded by the emperor. To a certain extent such an image was created by Kao-tsung himself, who allowed Ch'in Kuei to take over the reins of government as his own interests coincided with the

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114. See footnote 59 of Chapter I.

chief councillor's. Far from being weak, however, Kao-tsung was an assertive monarch who directed the government behind the scenes. It should also be pointed out that despite his lack of enthusiasm for war, Kao-tsung proved to be a responsible emperor. When the Chin troops began advancing southwards in late 1161, the emperor did contemplate fleeing from the enemy by sea, but he did not act as his father had done, abdicating in favour of his heir and leaving for a tour of the Yang-tzu region.[115] On the contrary, under the encouragement of his chief councillor, Ch'en K'ang-po, Kao-tsung summoned up enough courage to stay in the capital and even declared that he would lead the armies personally. It was only when the empire was no longer threatened in early 1162 that Kao-tsung declared his intention to step down from his throne.

It is interesting to note that although Kao-tsung abdicated his throne with an air of decisiveness in 6th/1162, he nevertheless took a long time to choose his heir. As he was childless after the death of his only son in 7th/1129, the emperor adopted two boys of royal descent (one of them being Hsiao-tsung) successively in 1132 and 1134 and brought them up as his own sons. Despite the frequent requests by his ministers to install his heir-apparent, Kao-tsung refused to indicate his preference for either of his two potential heirs. His reluctance to designate his heir-apparent was most probably due to his deep-seated fear that should another coup d'etat occur, he would be forced to abdicate in favour of his heir, as had happened during the Miao-Liu coup. Moreover, the fact that the war

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115. Biography of Hui-tsung, SS, ch.22, p.417.

and peace advocates at court appear to have chosen each of the two princes as their favourite[116] must have caused the emperor to act cautiously. He must have deliberately refrained from naming his heir in order to keep a balance between the war and peace advocates, so that no powerful faction could be built around the person of the heir-apparent. It was not until 1160 that Kao-tsung finally indicated his choice between the two potential heirs by formally declaring Hsiao-tsung to be the "Emperor's Son" (huang-tzu 皇子).[117] Even then, it was two years later, on the eve of his abdication, that he designated Hsiao-tsung as the heir-apparent.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that Kao-tsung chose his successor wisely. Hsiao-tsung turned out to be one of the best emperors of the Southern Sung and for this reason, Kao-tsung's appointment of Hsiao-tsung as his heir rightly gained the founding emperor the praise of later historians.[118] After many years of observation, Kao-tsung must have noticed certain qualities in Hsiao-tsung that made him decide in favour of the latter. Hsiao-tsung was adopted by Kao-tsung at the age of five in 1132. He was

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116. While the war advocates on the whole appear to champion the cause of the elder prince, Yüan 元 (that is, Hsiao-tsung), peace advocates such as Ch'in Kuei appear to be in favour of the younger, Chü 璩, see CYTC, Vol.2, ch.1, pp.6a-7a. The preference of Ch'in for Chü is also mentioned in CTYY, ch.11, pp.12a-12b.

117. CYYL, ch.184, p.3082. On the other hand, the title of Emperor's Nephew" (huang-chih 皇姪) was given to Prince Chü and thus for the first time a formal distinction was made between the two princes.

118. For example, the commentary attached to Hsiao-tsung's biography in the official Sung History gives credit to Kao-tsung for his choice of successor. See annals of Hsiao-tsung, SS, ch.35, p.692.

described as a boy of serious disposition, whose proper behaviour and non-impulsive character had influenced the emperor's decision to select him from a number of candidates sent for adoption.[119] It is also said that the prince's "heroic disposition" had so greatly impressed Yüeh Fei in 1137 that the latter was prompted to memorialize the throne to designate the young Hsiao-tsung as heir-apparent.[120] While it is doubtful whether a boy under ten years of age could really display such "heroic" nature, it may, however, be deduced that the prince's character could have been moulded by his first tutors,[121] who were on the side of the war advocates and were probably responsible to a certain extent for cultivating an anti-pacifist disposition in the future Hsiao-tsung. This anti-pacifist inclination of Hsiao-tsung is clearly portrayed during the 1161

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119. According to an anecdote, Kao-tsung had ten boys of royal descent brought into the palace as candidates for adoption. From the ten were chosen two whom the emperor was undecided about. So he ordered the two boys to stand in front of him with their arms folded so as to examine them closely. Suddenly a cat walked past, and while Hsiao-tsung stood undistracted, the other boy could not resist himself and gave the innocent cat a kick. Kao-tsung commented that such flippant behaviour would not be capable of carrying out important responsibilities and decided in favour of Hsiao-tsung. See Wang Ming-ch'ing 王明清, Hui-chu lu, yü-hua 揮麈錄, 餘話 (TSCC ed.), ch.1, p.874; CYTC, Vol.2, ch.1, pp.12a-12b.

120. CYTC, Vol.2, ch.1, p.7a; CYYL, ch.109, p.1764.

121. In 1135 Hsiao-tsung, who was then eight years old, began to receive instruction in the Confucian classics from Fan Ch'ung 范沖 and Chu Chen 朱震. The fact that Fan was related to Chao Ting by marriage and that both Fan and Chu had been recommended by Chang Chün and Chao Ting indicates that they were most probably friends of the war advocates, if not actually members of the war faction themselves. See biographies of Fan Ch'ung and Chu Chen in SS, ch.435, pp.12905-08. The relation between Fan Ch'ung and Chao Ting is mentioned in Chou Pi-ta, Wen-chung chi 文忠集 (WCC) (Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen 四庫全書珍本 SKCP ed.), ch.176, p.1b.

crisis, when he requested the emperor's permission to lead the army personally against the Jurchen invaders.[122] Although Kao-tsung appears to have been upset by his son's request, it is also likely that he could not but be impressed by the latter's bravery and unselfish concern for the defence of the empire.

Apart from handing over the reins of power to an able and responsible successor, Kao-tsung's abdication was also significant in another respect. Considering the fact that in the history of imperial China, most cases of succession to the throne was accompanied by a crisis, many involving violence,[123] the succession of Hsiao-tsung was indeed a smooth one. By his voluntary abdication, Kao-tsung was able to raise the status of the "Emperor Emeritus" or t'ai-shang-huang 太上皇 and redeem its honour in the light of imperial history. Although all Chinese abdications were officially voluntary, most of them were nevertheless forced, and "the creation of the t'ai-shang-huang became a kind of stylistic and moral solution to the untidy and unfilial problem of usurpation."[124] By the mid-T'ang period, the status of the t'ai-shang-huang had fallen low because of the many cases of forced abdication.[125] In the

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122. Biography of Hsiao-tsung, SS, ch.33, p.617.

123. See Dison H.F. Poe, "Imperial Succession and Attendant Crisis in Dynastic China", Tsing-hua Journal of Chinese Studies, New Series, Vol.8 (August 1970), Nos.1 & 2, pp.84-150.

124. Harold L. Kahn, Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), p.202.

125. Ibid., pp.205-211.

case of Sung Hui-tsung, even though his abdication was voluntary, the fact that he immediately fled to the south after becoming "Emperor Emeritus" did not contribute much to redeeming the honour of the t'ai-shang-huang either. It was thus left to Kao-tsung, who not only abdicated of his own free will but also with great honour and prestige.[126] The fact that Kao-tsung had abdicated from a position of strength rather than weakness was also an indication of the relative political stability of the time despite the recent emergency caused by the Jurchen invasion.

In conclusion, it can be said that although Kao-tsung failed to mount a campaign of reconquest against Chin, he did succeed in founding an empire and stabilizing its territorial holdings during his three and a half decades on the throne. He should be given due credit for salvaging the remnants of a fallen dynasty and laying new foundations upon the war-stricken empire. It was upon these foundations that his successor, Hsiao-tsung, was able to consolidate the regime.

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126. An eyewitness account of the abdication ceremony is recorded in Chou Pi-ta, Ch'in-cheng lu 親征錄 in WCC, ch.163, pp.18b-19b.

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY YEARS OF UNCERTAINTY AND THE PEACE SETTLEMENT OF 1164-1165

War or Peace?

At the time of Hsiao-tsung's accession to the throne, the Sung and Chin states were still at war. After the withdrawal of Chin forces in 11th/1161, the Sung army rapidly recovered the territories which had recently fallen into enemy hands. As fighting continued, the Sung were even able to recapture certain prefectures and districts which had come under Chin rule after the signing of the 1141-42 treaty. These included the four prefectures of Hai, Ssu 泗 (south-east of modern Ssu-hsien 泗縣 in An-hui 安徽), T'ang 唐 (modern Pi-yüan 沛源 hsien in Ho-nan) and Teng 鄧 (modern Teng-hsien in Ho-nan) in the Huai and Hsiang regions.[1] Also, just before Hsiao-tsung ascended the throne, the Pacification Commissioner of Ssu-ch'uan (Ssu-ch'uan hsüan-fu shih 四川宣撫使), Wu Lin, had succeeded in recovering a number of prefectures along the north-western frontier.[2] The Chin were naturally unhappy with

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1. After the renewal of Sung-Chin hostilities in 1161, the Sung managed to recover ten prefectures in the Huai and Hsiang regions, but by the time Hsiao-tsung became emperor, only the four prefectures of Hai, Ssu, T'ang and Teng remained in Sung hands. See CYTC, Vol.1, ch.20, p.5b.

2. See Shen Ch'i-wei 沈起煒, Sung-Chin chan-cheng shih-lüeh 宋金戰鬪略 (Hupei, 1958), p.152.

these developments, and the territory mentioned above became an important bone of contention between the two nations.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, following the death of their leader Hai-ling, the Chin immediately withdrew their forces to the north. Although fighting continued for a time, in 1st/1162 the Chin sent envoys to Sung territory to announce the accession of their new emperor, Shih-tsung (r. 1161-1189), and the Sung immediately responded by sending the Division Chief in the Department of Ministries Hung Mai 洪邁 and the Administrator of the Palace Postern (chih ko-men shih 知閤門事) Chung Lun 張掄 to receive them at the border and discuss mutually acceptable conditions for peace.[3] After several months of negotiations at Hsü-i 盱眙 (modern Hsü-i, on the southern banks of the Huai River),[4] the Chin envoys were finally allowed to proceed to the Sung court in 3rd/1162. Following their visit, Kao-tsung decided to send Hung Mai and Chang Lun as envoys to Chin to congratulate the Chin emperor on his accession. At the same time, they were to present three requests to the Chin emperor, namely, the return of the imperial coffin of Ch'in-tsung, the return of former Sung territory in Ho-nan, and the abolition of vassal status and annual tribute.[5]

It can thus be seen that the Sung were attempting to use their improved military position to achieve long-cherished political

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3. CYYL, ch.196, p.3313.

4. For an account of the negotiations between Hung Mai and the Chin envoys, see YWL, ch.2, pp.4b-5a.

5. Ibid., p.5b.

goals. They also considered themselves entitled to some form of compensation for the enemy's violation of their peace agreement. However, their requests proved to be too demanding for the Chin, who insisted that the former treaty terms be observed.[6] The mission thus failed to accomplish its aims and both Hung Mai and Chang Lun were demoted after their return in 7th/1162.[7] By then, Hsiao-tsung had been on the throne for over a month, and at the insistence of Second Privy Councillor Shih Hao 史浩, the emperor decided to send the Drafting Official of the Secretariat, Liu Kung 劉珙, and the Administrator of the Palace Postern Chang Yüeh 張說, as envoys to Chin to formally announce his own accession.[8] By accepting Shih Hao's advice, Hsiao-tsung indicated his desire for restoring peace. Before they would receive the Sung envoys, however, the Chin once again demanded the return of the territories which had recently fallen into Sung hands as well as the resumption of former protocol in official documents and annual payments. After going through negotiations at the border, the Sung envoys were refused entry to Chin territory and returned home.[9]

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6. For the arguments between the Sung envoys and their Chin counterparts, see ibid., pp.7b-9a.

7. Ibid., p.7b.

8. It is said that after their return from Chin, Hung Mai and Chang Lun told Chang Chün that they had not been treated with proper respect by the enemy; thereupon Chang said that no more envoys should be sent. However, Shih Hao proposed that envoys be sent to announce the accession of Hsiao-tsung, and thus it was decided to send Liu Kung to Chin. See CYYL, ch.200, p.3394; HTC, ch.137, pp.3651-52.

9. YWL, ch.2, p.9b; CYYL, ch.200, p.3394.

The initial attempts at peace negotiations thus failed because of the Sung refusal to accede to Chin demands for the restoration of former treaty terms. Although Hsiao-tsung was initially hoping for a negotiated settlement, he was more aggresive than his predecessor Kao-tsung, and one perhaps would not have expected him to give in easily to the enemy. His determination to hold on to his newly-recovered territories is illustrated by the fact that one of his first acts as emperor was to summon the great war advocate, Chang Chün, to court. Although Chang had been appointed Governor of Chien-k'ang (p'an Chien-k'ang fu 判建康府) after the Chin invasion in the previous year, he had not been further promoted by Kao-tsung. However, Hsiao-tsung expressed his confidence in Chang Chün by honouring him with the prestigious titles of Wei Kuo-kung 魏國公 and Junior Tutor (shao-fu 少傅), and also by appointing him to be Pacification Commissioner of the Chiang-Huai region (Chiang-Huai hsüan-fu shih 江淮宣撫使) within the same month of his accession.[10] Besides Chang, another well-known war advocate, Hu Ch'üan 胡銓, who had suffered persecution at the hands of Ch'in Kuei, was also summoned.[11] Hsiao-tsung also indicated his own position at this time by granting posthumous honours to the greatest victim of Ch'in Kuei's

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10. CYYL, ch.200, p.3391. For the imperial audience granted to Chang Chün in 6th/1162, see the hsing-chuan 行狀 (biographical account of the deceased) of Chang Chün in Chu Hsi 朱熹, Chu Wen-kung wen-chi 朱文公文集 (CWC), SPTK ed., ch.95, pt.2, p.1696.

11. Biography of Hu Ch'üan, SS, ch.374, p.11583. See also Hu's tomb inscription (shen-tao pei 神道碑) in WCC, ch.30, pp.13b-14a.

administration, Yüeh Fei.[12]

Hsiao-tsung appears to have been very much impressed by Chang Chün during their first interview.[13] Seeing that the emperor was inclined towards the war advocates, Chang naturally seized the opportunity to encourage Hsiao-tsung to adopt a more aggressive foreign policy. Despite his personal inclinations, however, Hsiao-tsung proved cautious in his dealings with the Chin. In this he was at least to some extent influenced by Shih Hao, his former tutor who was promoted to be second privy councillor soon after Hsiao-tsung's accession. Shih became the chief opponent of Chang Chün in a number of subsequent controversies at court.

As might be expected, one of these clashes concerned the question of defence. Shih was in favour of fortifying Kua-chou and Ts'ai-shih along the Yang-tzu, but Chang opposed this on the grounds that it would indicate weakness on the part of the Sung. He proposed fortifying Ssu-chou further north.[14] It should be noted that while the pacifists were on the whole in favour of consolidating the Sung position along the Yang-tzu, the irredentists were more ambitious and insisted on building up defences along the

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12. Chou Pi-ta, Lung-fei lu 龍飛錄 in WCC, ch.164, p.5b; CYYL ch.200, p.3392.

13. CWC, ch.95,pt.ii, p.1696; SSPM, ch.77, p.809.

14. For Chang Chün's memorial regarding the importance of defending Ssu-chou, see Fu Tseng-hsiang 傅增湘 comp., Sung-tai Shu-wen chi-ts'un 宋代蜀文輯存 (SWCT) (Hong Kong: Lung-men shu-tien, 1971), ch.43, pp.6a-6b.

Huai River.[15] The question of whether to concentrate Sung defence in the Yang-tzu or Huai regions was to become a matter of intense debate in the next few years of war against the Chin.

Soon after becoming emperor, Hsiao-tsung was confronted with two other issues relating to foreign relations. In 9th/1162, in response to Chin demands for peace, Hsiao-tsung issued a decree calling upon the officials to discuss two urgent matters. First, they were to discuss whether to agree to Chin demands for the restoration of the former treaty terms or to refuse them and keep fighting. Second, they were to discuss the problem of the refugees (kuei-cheng jen 歸正人) who kept fleeing into Sung territory from the north. These refugees had placed Sung in something of a dilemma, for by accepting them, the country would be faced with a heavy financial burden in order to support them; by refusing them, however, it was felt that the Sung state would lose the loyalty of the people of the Central Plain.[16] In the ensuing discussion at court, most officials were against giving up the four prefectures of Hai, Ssu, T'ang and Teng which were being demanded by the Chin. Most also appear to have been in favour of accepting the refugees.[17]

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15. For example, the censorial official Wang Shih-p'eng was a supporter of Chang Chün in his policy of defending the Huai region. He said: "... to defend the Huai is to defend the Yang-tzu. If we abandon the Huai and defend only the Yang-tzu, we will be sharing the natural defences of the Yang-tzu with the enemy, how are we going to keep it in our hands!" See MCC, "tsou-i", ch.2, p.14a.

16. CYTC, Vol.1, ch.20, p.6a.

17. For the views of the various officials on the two issues, see ibid., p.6b.

The councillors were the only ones who did not give their opinions voluntarily. When questioned by the emperor, Shih Hao replied:

> ... to first prepare ourselves for defence is the best strategy. Whether to have war or peace does not depend on us but on the enemy.... We should fortify the walls to defend against the enemy onslaught and await for an opportune time to carry out a campaign of reconquest....[18]

Shih went on to accuse his opponents of advocating irresponsible aggressive action, saying that much misery would be caused if their policies were implemented.[19]

With regard to the question of refugees, Shih Hao also held a different view from most of the other officials at court. Since the renewal of Sung-Chin hostilities in 1161, a great number of refugees had crossed into Sung territory from the north. The policy so far had been rather lenient towards them and they had been well-treated by Sung authorities. Apart from humanitarian reasons, it had been argued that the acceptance of these refugees would ensure the loyalty of the former Sung citizens in enemy territory. For example, Chang Chün once pointed out strongly why the refugees should not be refused:

> Once the order (of not taking in refugees) is passed, the people in the Central Plain will think that we intend to reject them and consequently we will lose their loyalty to our country.... Once they change their loyalty, they will become our enemy....[20]

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18. Shih Hao 史浩, Mou-feng chen-yin man-lu 鄮峰真隱漫錄 (MFML), SKCP ed., ch.8, p.1b.

19. Ibid., ch.8, p.2a.

20. See Chang Chün's memorial on "Six reasons why the refugees should not be refused," in SWCT, ch.43, p.5b.

In the same memorial Chang also claimed that the best soldiers were usually refugees from the north. Indeed, it was his policy to recruit the so-called "loyalist soldiers" (i-ping 義兵) into the army.[21]

Shih Hao, on the other hand, regarded the refugees with great suspicion and was against taking them in because of the expense they would entail for the local population. As he said in one of his memorials on the subject:

> Since war broke out last winter, the loyalist officials who returned as refugees came to more than five hundred in number, and they have all been rewarded with important positions by the government.... Also there are numerous loyalist commoners among the refugees who drain the fat and blood (that is, the resources) of our people .... I am afraid that in a few years' time, our country's reserves will be gone....[22]

In another memorial he questioned the refugees' loyalty:

> When the northerners first arrive with their old and young, they appear to be very grateful to be united with their fellow countrymen.... But these people often turn out to be of mean character. If the rewards and payments fail to satisfy them, they will feel discontented and it is not unlikely that they might secretly report our country's affairs to the enemy. Furthermore there are those

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21. In 5th/1162, when he was governor of Chien-k'ang, Chang Chün had memorialised for the recruitment of the loyalist soldiers in Huai-pei 淮北 to fight the enemy. His request was approved and many were recruited. See CYYL, ch.119, p.3376.

22. See Shih Hao's memorial on "A discussion on refugees," in MFML, ch.7, pp.8b-11a; the quotation is taken from p.9a.

> among them whose original intention of coming to our country is to act as spies....[23]

Shih also argued that since the Sung were not ready to launch any successful offensive against the Jurchen, it was therefore unrealistic to recruit the refugees as a means of ensuring the loyalty of the people of the Central Plain.[24] Nevertheless, the war advocates were of the opinion that the reconquest of the lost territory was imminent and that it was essential to get the co-operation of the loyalists in the Central Plain. Consequently, the policy concerning the refugees varied quite widely from time to time during these early years of Hsiao-tsung's reign. When an offensive foreign policy was pursued, the refugees were recruited in large numbers by the authorities. However, when the government was in favour of peace negotiations, orders would be sent out to the officials at the borders not to take in any more refugees.

During the first few months of his reign Hsiao-tsung appears to have been as yet undecided about his foreign policy. He was not prone to be rash and rarely accepted the advice of his officials uncritically. While putting his trust on Chang Chün to prepare for military action, he did not regard the counsel of Shih Hao lightly. It was due to Shih's ideas that in 12th/1162, Hsiao-tsung ordered Wu Lin to withdraw from the military prefecture of Te-shun 德順 (east of modern Ching-ning 靜寧 in Kan-su 甘肅),

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23. See Shih Hao's memorial on "A second discussion on refugees," in ibid., ch.7, pp.11a-13a; the quotation is taken from p.12a.

24. Ibid., ch.7, p.11b.

which Wu had been trying to prevent from falling into enemy hands.[25] The caution advocated by Shih Hao was clearly reflected in the personally written decree which Hsiao-tsung sent to Wu Lin on this occasion:

> If we defend Te-shun with all our might, the enemy might flee ... but our soldiers will be exhausted or dead in the remote region and this will not serve the purpose of reconquest....[26]

He thus ordered Wu to return to Ch'in-chou 秦州 (south-west of modern T'ien-shui 天水 hsien in Kan-su) and Lung-chou 隴州 (Lung-hsien 隴縣 in Shensi) so as to concentrate the war efforts in areas closer to the Sung borders. It is said that Wu was much disheartened on receiving these orders, but knowing that the court was in favour of peace, he obeyed and withdrew his forces. As a result, the newly-recovered territory in the north-west consisting of thirteen prefectures again fell into Chin hands.[27]

Meanwhile, the Chin began to show signs of impatience at the continued refusal of the Sung to observe the terms of the former treaty. It should be pointed out that in the first year of his reign, Chin Shih-tsung had been troubled by uprisings in

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25. See the tomb inscription for Shih Hao in Lou Yüeh 樓鑰, Kung-k'uei chi 攻媿集 (KKC), SPTK ed., ch.93, p.877. In his impeachment of Shih Hao in 5th/1163, Wang Shih-p'eng accused Shih of instigating his faction to spread rumours about a combined attack by the Jurchen and the Hsi-hsia against Wu Lin, thereby forcing Wu to withdraw from Te-shun. See MCC, 'tsou-i", ch.3, p.3b and p.6a.

26. The decree of Hsiao-tsung to Wu Lin is preserved in MFML, ch.6, pp.15b-16a.

27. HTC, ch.138, p.3660.

various parts of his territory.[28] However, by 9th/1162, having consolidated his own power and suppressed the rebels, the Chin emperor now turned his attention to Sung. During the next few months two generals named Ho-shih-lieh Chin-ning 紇石烈志寧 and Pu-san Chung-i 僕散忠義 were ordered to prepare for a southern expedition against the Sung.[29] By the end of 1162, the Chin had stationed 100,000 men in Ho-nan in preparation for an attack on the Liang-Huai region.[30] Chang Chün then strengthened Sung defences there by stationing troops in Hsü-i, Ssu-chou, Hao-chou 濠州 (north-east of Feng-yang 鳳陽 in An-hui) and Lu-chou 廬州 (Ho-fei 合肥 in An-hui). Seeing that the Sung were well prepared, the Chin did not attack but sent a letter to demand the prefectures of Hai, Ssu, T'ang, Teng and Shang 商 (modern Shang-hsien in Shensi) and annual payments from Sung.[31] In other words, the Chin were still insisting that the terms of the former treaty be observed. At the advice of Chang Chün, the Sung paid no attention to this letter and nothing immediately came of the Chin threat.

In 1st/1163, Shih Hao was promoted to be Right Chief Councillar while Chang Chün was appointed Commissioner of Military Affairs and General Superintendent of the Chiang-Huai Army (tu-tu

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28. YWL, ch.2, p.9a.

29. The official biographies of Ho-shih-lieh chih-ning and Pu-san Chung-i are found in CS, ch.87, pp.1929-41.

30. CYYL, ch.200, p.3409.

31. Ibid.

Chiang-Huai chün-ma 都督江淮軍馬).[32] Their simultaneous appointments to these important positions must have been designed by Hsiao-tsung in order to maintain a balance between war and peace advocates during this time of indecision. Although the two chief councillors, Ch'en K'ang-po and Shih Hao, were both opposed to war, however, the court began to be dominated by a group of militants who were ardent supporters of Chang Chün. They included such famous officials as Hu Ch'üan, Wang Shih-p'eng and Wang Ta-pao 王大寶.

In his advocacy of an offensive foreign policy in late 1162, Chang Chün put forward the proposal that the Sung should first recover the territory in Shan-tung 山東, and argued that warships should be sent there in order to reduce the military pressure on Wu Lin in the north-west.[33] His proposals were opposed by Shih Hao who argued that by sending forces to Shan-tung, the Sung were weakening the defence of the Chiang-Huai area and exposing it to enemy attacks:

> If we have the idea of invading Shan-tung in order to relieve the pressure in the Ssu-ch'uan and Shensi region, would not the enemy have a similar idea of attacking the Liang-Huai and the Ching-Hsiang 荊襄 regions in order to relieve the emergency in Shan-tung? Our strategy is to fortify the defence of the Chiang-Huai region ... to control the strategic locations and not to move away from there....[34]

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32. WCC, ch.164, p.13a.

33. For Chang Chün's memorials on attacking Shan-tung, see SWCT, ch.44, pp.14b-17a.

34. See MFML, ch.7, pp.4a-7b, and in particular, p.4b.

Hsiao-tsung was apparently convinced by these arguments and Chang Chün's plans were not approved.

Shih Hao's influence upon Hsiao-tsung is also shown by the emperor's decision to adopt Shih's proposal concerning the method of gathering support in the Central Plain. Instead of recruiting the loyalists into the Sung army, Shih proposed giving official recognition to these loyalists by granting the status of "fiefs" to the areas and prefectures occupied by them in enemy territory. His plan was adopted in 2nd/1163, when a scholar without rank (pu-i 布衣), Li Hsin-fu 李信甫 (who had earlier memorialised about the advantages of recruiting loyalists), was sent as Proclamation Commissioner (hsüan-yü shih 宣諭使) to meet the loyalists in the Central Plain.[35] He carried with him a message from the emperor informing those loyalists who were occupying various territories that they were permitted to make their possessions into hereditary fiefs.[36] This was a way of consolidating the areas in the hands of Sung loyalists without incurring any expense on the part of the government.

While this was taking place, the Chin began to step up their pressure upon the Sung. In 3rd/1163, the assistant commander of the Chin army, Ho-shih-lieh chih-ning, sent a letter to Chang Chün demanding the return of the territories which had fallen into Sung hands since 1161. He further insisted that the former borders

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35. CYTC, Vol.1, ch.20, p.7b; HTC, ch.138, p.3660.

36. For the imperial proclamation to the loyalists of the Central Plain, see MFML, ch.6, pp.19a-21a.

and all the terms of the former treaty be observed. If these demands were not met, he threatened, war would ensue.[37] Chang refused to submit to this pressure and replied that it was common for territory on the frontiers to change hands from time to time, just as it was common for the army to experience victories and defeat in battles.[38]

Throughout these diplomatic exchanges, the Chin were stationing their troops in Hung-hsien 虹縣 (modern Ssu-hsien 泗縣, in northern An-hui) and Ling-pi 靈壁 (modern Ling-pi in northern An-hui).[39] Chang Chün, who felt that the Sung forces were ready for war, decided that it was time for them to begin an offensive against the enemy. Two generals under Chang's command, Li Hsien-chung and Shao Hung-yüan 邵宏淵 had earlier proposed attacking Hung-hsien and Ling-pi, and Chang agreed.[40] Others opposed the plan, however, including the general Ch'en Min 陳敏, who argued against fighting during the heat of summer.[41] The Military Consultants (ts'an-tsan chün-shih 參贊軍事) T'ang Wen-jo 唐文若 and Ch'en Chün-ch'ing 陳俊卿 also proposed delaying action.[42]

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37. HTC, ch.138, pp.3661-62.

38. For Chang Chün's letter to the Chin commander, see SWCT, ch.41, p.15a.

39. SSPM, ch.77, p.810.

40. CYTC, Vol.1, ch.20, p.7b; HTC, ch.138, p.3665.

41. For Ch'en Min's arguments against the Sung offensive, see Chou Mi 周密, Ch'i-tung yeh-yü 齊東野語 (CTYY) (Chin-tai pi-shu 津逮秘書 ed.), ch.2, pp.10a-10b.

42. See CYTC, Vol.1, ch.20, p.7b and CTYY, ch.2, p.11a.

The Abortive Campaign of 1163 and its Aftermath

In 4th/1163, Chang Chün was summoned to court and there he put forward his proposal for a northern campaign against the Chin. Seeing that the emperor was interested in restoration, Chang Chün tried to persuade him to move to Chien-k'ang in order to speed up the war efforts. Hsiao-tsung was still hesitant and asked Shih Hao for his opinion. Shih opposed the proposal on the grounds that this would put the enemy on the alert and at the same time incur heavy expenses for the Sung.[43] Thereupon, Hsiao-tsung decided against leaving for Chien-k'ang. Chang Chün was naturally disappointed and told the emperor that he should think in terms of achieving immediate success rather than losing an opportunity for the sake of short-term security. After the court session, Shih Hao is said to have told Chang Chün, "The emperor's army should be used with great caution. How can we use it to try our luck?"[44]

This event was followed by a debate between the two in which Chang was of the opinion that if the Central Plain was not recovered then, it would fall into the hands of the "heroic fighters" (hao-chieh 豪傑, referring to those military strongmen and loyalists who took up arms against the enemy). Shih replied that there were no such heroes there, otherwise they would already have risen up against the Chin. Chang then said that the heroes were unable to fight without proper arms and were waiting for the assistance of the Sung army. To this Shih replied that if they had to wait for

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43. KKC, ch.93, p.877; CTYY, ch.2, p.11b.

44. KKC, ch.93, p.877.

Sung assistance, they were no heroes; if indeed there were such heroes, the fact that they were unable to organise an uprising showed that they were under the control of the Chin, and that meant the Sung should not attack the enemy without careful consideration.[45]

Shih Hao further tried to dissuade Hsiao-tsung against the northern campaign by submitting a memorial in which he said that he fully understood the desire of the emperor to avenge the wrong done by the enemy, but that they had to face the reality the Sung were simply not prepared for such a campaign. He went on to point out that it was not that Kao-tsung had not wanted to fight the enemy, but that it was impossible to mount a successful counter-attack then; and it was even more difficult now:

> At that time, the generals Chang Chün, Han Shih-chung, Liu Kuang-shih and Yüeh Fei each commanded several hundred thousands of soldiers who were all courageous men from the northwest. They fought the enemy for fifteen to sixteen years, yet they were unable to recover a single inch of territory! Now, would it not be difficult for reckless and inexperienced generals such as Li Hsien-chung and Shao Hung-yüan to achieve victory![46]

He then proposed building up the defences of the country and perhaps attempting a campaign against the Chin in another ten years' time.

Shih Hao thus constantly stressed the theme of consolidation rather than expansion. On this occasion, however, his advice was not adopted. Chang Chün is said to have told the emperor that Shih was too stubborn and that the golden opportunity might be lost. He

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45. For the debate between Chang Chün and Shih Hao, see KKC, ch.93, pp.877-78 and CTYY, ch.2, pp.12a-12b.

46. For Shih Hao's memorial against the northern campaign, see MFML, ch.7, pp.13b-14b.

also stressed that the Jurchen would definitely attack in the coming autumn and that the Sung should surprise them with an offensive before they did.[47] Despite his father's warnings that he should not listen to Chang Chün,[48] Hsiao-tsung finally decided in favour of the northern expedition. Because this was opposed by both chief councillors Shih Hao and Ch'en K'ang-po,[49] Hsiao-tsung decided to proceed without going through the proper channels of the Three Departments and the Bureau of Military Affairs. Secret orders were issued for Chang Chün to supervise the formation of Sung troops in the Huai valley in preparation for a northern offensive. The campaign was launched in late 4th/1163 when Chang Chün ordered Li Hsien-chung to leave Hao-chou for Ling-pi, and Shao Huang-yüan to leave Ssu-chou for Hung-hsien.[50]

This was the first occasion since the beginning of Sung-Chin hostilities nearly two years earlier that the Sung had mounted an offensive campaign, and they had considerable initial success. On 7/5th/1163, Li Hsien-chung captured Ling-pi[51] while on the

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47. SSPM, ch.77, p.811. For one of Chang Chün's memorials in favour of an offensive campaign, see SWCT, ch.41, pp.16b-17a.

48. It is said that when Kao-tsung heard of the intended campaign, he asked Hsiao-tsung not to listen to Chang Chün, and said that Chang would bring more harm than good to the country. See CTYY, ch.2, p.14a.

49. Most sources emphasize that Shih Hao was opposed to the northern expedition, but it should be pointed out that the Left Chief Councillor Ch'en K'ang-po was also not in favour of the campaign, as stated in CYTC, Vol.1, ch.20, p.8a.

50. CWC, ch.95, pt.2, p.1699; SSPM, ch.77, p.811.

51. YWL, ch.2, p.11a.

following day, Shao Huang-yüan recovered Hung-hsien with Li's assistance.[52] By the middle of 5th/1163, these two commanders had also succeeded in dislodging Chin forces from Su-chou 宿州 (modern Su-hsien 宿縣, north of the Huai River in northern An-hui).

Hsiao-tsung was overjoyed when he heard about these victories and wrote to Chang Chün saying that the news had led to much rejoicing at court and elsewhere.[53] In the meantime, however, Shih Hao had indignantly submitted his resignation in protest against the emperor's decision to carry out the campaign without his knowledge. He also told Hsiao-tsung that he could not compromise with Ch'en K'ang-po's policy of recruiting the refugees (while advocating the adoption of a cautious foreign policy, Ch'en was nevertheless in favour of accepting refugees), or Chang Chün's offensive foreign policy.[54] The General Censor Wang Shih-p'eng then impeached Shih, accusing him of following in Ch'in Kuei's footsteps by pursuing a peace policy and by abandoning the recovered territory of Te-shun, among other "crimes".[55] Despite his high regard for Shih, Hsiao-tsung decided to accept his resignation, since the former's uncompromising attitude would be an obstruction rather than a help to the implementation of an offensive foreign

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52. Li Hsien-chung is said to have sent the surrendered troops from Ling-pi to speak to the Chin generals in Hung-hsien, and succeeded in persuading them to surrender. See HTC, ch.138, p.3666; biography of Li Hsien-chung, SS, ch.367, p.11431.

53. CWC, ch.95, pt.2, p.1699; HTC, ch.138, p.3667.

54. KKC, ch.93, pp.878-79.

55. For Wang Shih-p'eng impeachment of Shih Hao, see MCC, "tsou-i", ch.3, pp.2b-5b.

policy, which, at the moment, appeared to be a successful one.

The triumph of the hawkish elements at court was short-lived, however. After their early success, the Sung forces experienced a disastrous defeat in Su-chou before the end of 5th/1163. Among the factors which contributed to this defeat were a rapid counter-attack by the Chin,[56] and the jealousy and lack of co-operation between the Sung generals Li Hsien-chung and Shao Hung-yüan. Difficulties between the two men began when Li executed one of Shao's men for robbing a Chin soldier of his sword.[57] Shao was even more displeased when an order from Chang Chün placed him under Li's command.[58] Although a second order arrived the next day giving equal power to both men, Shao was still bitter and is said to have refused to give Li any assistance in fighting the enemy.[59] The problems between the two commanders naturally affected the morale of the troops, who were already unhappy with the small rewards they had received after recovering Su-chou.[60]

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56. It is said that after their defeat at Su-chou, the Chin sent a selected army of 100,000 men to fight the Sung forces at Su-chou; also, a cavalry of 100,000 men was dispatched from K'ai-feng for the counter-attack. YWL, ch.2, p.12a; HTC, ch.138, p.3668.

57. Biography of Li Hsien-chung, SS, ch.367, p.11431.

58. YWL, ch.2, p.12a.

59. HTC, ch.138, p.3668; biography of Li Hsien-chung, SS, ch.367, p.11432.

60. Li Hsien-chung was to be blamed for this, for instead of rewarding the soldiers richly as Shao Hung-yüan had suggested, Li only gave each of them a little cash, and is said to have collected all the valuables in the Su-chou treasury for himself. See CTYY, ch.2, p.15b. The dissatisfaction of the Sung troops was regarded as the chief cause for Sung defeat. See the tomb inscription for Chou K'uei 周葵 in WCC, ch.63, p.9b.

Given this background, it is perhaps not surprising that the demoralised officers under Li's and Shao's command fled with their troops at the approach of the Chin reinforcements on 22/5th/1163. Li was able to withstand the enemy assault for a while, but since he was unable to get Shao's co-operation,[61] he eventually had no choice but to flee as well. Consequently, the Chin forces under Ho-shih-lieh Chih-ning succeeded in recapturing Su-chou, and sent an army after the retreating Sung troops. The Sung forces were caught at nearby Fu-li 符離 and suffered heavy losses; many soldiers were killed and others drowned in the river while attempting to escape.[62] The Chin were thus able to score a decisive victory after earlier losses, which were very minor compared with the ones suffered by the Sung at Fu-li.[63]

The news of the Sung defeat must have been a shock and humiliation for both Chang Chün and the emperor. Chang was at Hsü-i when Li Hsien-chung came to see him and handed in his official seal. Chang then crossed to the northern side of the Huai River, and after inspecting the defeated troops at Ssu-chou, withdrew to

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61. Shao Hung-yüan was in favour of withdrawal on grounds that the Sung forces would not be able to fight the Chin troops, who had been reinforced with 200,000 men. See HTC, ch.138, p.3669.

62. Ibid. An account of the Sung defeat is also given in CTYY, ch.2, pp.16a-16b.

63. While the Chin lost a few generals and several hundred men who surrendered to Sung after the fall of Ling-pi and Hung-hsien (see CYTC, Vol.1, ch.20, p.301), the Sung loss was much greater. According to CTYY, ch.2, p.16b, the Sung troops numbered 130,000 and many were killed during their withdrawal. According to HTC, ch.138, p.3669, during the disaster at Fu-li, besides the countless number of soldiers who were drowned, the Chin decapitated over 4,000 men and obtained 30,000 sets of armour.

Yang-chou, where he wrote a self-impeaching memorial to the throne.[64] Chang was so discouraged by the Sung defeat that in 6th/1163, he submitted his resignation and even requested that peace negotiations be carried out with the Chin.[65] It is said that Hsiao-tsung was furious and remarked: "What do you mean by suing for peace just after our defeat!"[66] Despite his disappointment and anger over the abortive campaign, however, the emperor did not immediately demote Chang, even though many officials were blaming the latter for the Sung defeat. Instead Hsiao-tsung told Chang:

> The responsibility of the border is still entrusted to you. You must not waver because of what others say. At the beginning of the campaign I gave you the responsibility, and now I will support you to the end.[67]

With the reassurance from the emperor, Chang carried out various defence measures in the Liang-Huai region, assigning Wei Shen to defend Hai-chou, Ch'en Min to defend Ssu-chou, Ch'i Fang 戚方 to defend Hao-chou and Kuo Chen 郭振 to defend Liu-ho 六合 (modern Liu-ho hsien in Chiang-su). He also fortified the walls at

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64. CWC, ch.95, pt.2, p.1699.

65. It is said that after the Sung defeat, Chang Chün heard rumours that the Jurchen were on their way to invade Sung and thus requested that envoys be sent to negotiate for peace. See CYTC, Vol.1, ch.20, p.8b. According to Chou Mi, Chang Chün contemplated sending the Prefectural Vice-Administrator of T'ai-p'ing (T'ai-p'ing chou t'ung-p'an 太平州通判), Chang Wen-ku 張蘊古, as envoy to Chin to negotiate for peace, but was dissuaded by his subordinates. He then resigned but again requested sending envoys to negotiate for peace. See CTYY, ch.2, p.16b.

66. CTYY, ch.2, p.16b.

67. CWC, ch.95, pt.2, p.1699.

Kao-yu高郵 (modern Kao-yu in Chiang-su) and Ch'ao-hsien巢縣 (modern An-ch'ing安慶 in An-hui), and repaired the walls at Ch'u-chou滁州 (modern Ch'u-hsien in An-hui). Finally, he assembled the navy at Huai-yin淮陰 (modern Huai-yin hsien in Chiang-su) and the cavalry at Shou-ch'un壽春 (modern Shou-hsien in An-Hui).[68] By fortifying Sung defence in the Huai region and by sending his generals to guard Hai-chou and Ssu-chou and other locations, it is clear that Chang had not given up his intention of pursuing an offensive foreign policy despite his temporary loss of confidence following the Sung defeat at Fu-li.

Nevertheless, even though he put a brave face on the matter, the abortive attempt to recover lost territory somewhat discouraged Hsiao-tsung, and his subsequent actions showed that he was beginning to waver in his determination to fight the enemy. Indeed, he soon appeared to have been anxious to enter into peace negotiations with the Jurchen.[69] Soon after the defeat at Fu-li in 6th/1163, the emperor appointed T'ang Ssu-t'ui, a well-known peace advocate who had served as chief councillor during Kao-tsung's reign, to the position of Reader-In-Waiting (shih-tu侍讀).[70] A few days later, he issued a self-critical edict on the campaign. An Investigating Censor, Yin Se who was closely associated with T'ang Ssu-t'ui, then impeached Chang Chün. As a result, Chang was demoted from his post as General Superintendent

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68. Ibid.

69. HTC, ch.138, p.3670.

70. Ibid.

to that of Pacification Commissioner of the Chiang-Huai region.[71]

The demotion of Chang Chün immediately led to protests from the more aggressive elements at court. The General Censor Wang Shih-p'eng had earlier spoken in defence of the abortive campaign and requested the emperor not to waver because of dissenting opinions over the Sung defeat.[72] Now, in another memorial, he again spoke in defence of Chang Chün and the campaign:

> I was partly responsible for advising Your Majesty to employ Chang Chün despite the opposition of others.... Chang then sent the two generals to recover Ling-pi, Hung-hsien and Su-chou, achieving three victories within a month, and everyone was impressed.... However, dissent immediately arose again once the Sung troops were defeated.... As I told Your Majesty formerly, the northern campaign was launched for the sake of the imperial tombs, to avenge the two emperors, Hui-tsung and Ch'in-tsung, and to avenge the people of the Central Plain. It is by no means comparable to irresponsible campaigns motivated by the desire for fame....[73]

Wang then submitted his resignation saying that since Chang Chün was demoted, he himself could no longer stay on as a censorial official. Hsiao-tsung then appointed him Vice-Minister of Personnel but eventually assigned him to be Administrator of Jao-chou饒州after Wang persistently declined to serve at court.[74]

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71. Ibid.

72. For Wang Shih-p'eng's memorial on the defeat at Su-chou, see MCC, "tsou-i", ch.2, pp.13b-14a.

73. For the memorial of Wang Shih-p'eng, see ibid.,ch.4, pp.6b-7b.

74. See biography of Wang Shih-p'eng, SS, ch.387, p.11886.

Following Wang's departure, the Second Privy Councillor Hsin Tz'u-ying 辛次膺 resigned on the grounds of illness. The real reason for his resignation, however, was his friendship with Wang and his opposition to T'ang Ssu-t'ui.[75] Despite Hsin's warning that T'ang would not be able to live up to the emperor's expectations, Hsiao-tsung had made up his mind and T'ang was subsequently made Right Chief Councillor in 7th/1163. The Right Policy Critic Adviser Wang Ta-pao then criticized T'ang for his peace policies in general and his proposal to abolish the office of General Superintendent (tu-fu 督府), formerly headed by Chang Chün, in particular. In order to prevent Wang from making further criticism, Hsiao-tsung promoted him to the position of Vice-Minister of War, but he eventually left the court with a sinecure after having declined his new appointment.[76]

From the dismissal of censorial officials such as Wang Ta-pao and Wang Shih-p'eng, it appears that Hsiao-tsung decided to prevent them from criticizing his policy. However, instead of suppressing their opinion entirely, he subtly reduced their influence by transferring them to other positions. Nevertheless, the fact that both Wangs declined their new appointments shows that they fully understood the ramifications of Hsiao-tsung's actions. Besides these two men, there were many other censorial

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75. Hsin Tz'u-ying had formerly recommended Wang Shih-p'eng and memorialized against T'ang Ssu-t'ui. See biography of Hsin Tz'u-ying, SS, ch.383, p.11804.

76. Biography of Wang Ta-pao, SS, ch.386, p.11857; CYTC, Vol.1, ch.5, p.7a.

officials who resigned and left because of their opposition to T'ang Ssu-t'ai, thus leaving a vacuum in the Censorate which Hsiao-tsung did not attempt to fill.[77] When he was approached by the Minister of Works Chang Shan 張闡 concerning the appointment of more censorial officials, the emperor avoided the issue by saying that as most scholar-officials were fond of making a name of themselves by appearing to be upright, it was difficult to select censorial officials.[78] It was after much persuasion by Chang Shan and the Chancellery Imperial Recorder (ch'i-chü lang 起居郎) Hu Ch'üan that Hsiao-tsung agreed to look into the matter though he kept insisting that he was not against upright criticism.[79] From the above, it appears that the Censorate had been dominated by the war advocates at the beginning of Hsiao-tsung's reign, and their dismissal clearly indicates the change in government policy from an offensive one to one which was in favour of peace.

However, in spite of the ascendancy of the pacifists in court after the abortive campaign, their victory was not total. In 8th/1163 Hsiao-tsung reinstated Chang Chün as General Superintendent of the Chiang-Huai Army.[80] While anxious to achieve peace,

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77. CYTC, Vol.1, ch.5, p.7a.

78. See the tomb inscription for Chang Shan, WCC, ch.61, pp.7a-7b; CYTC, Vol.1, ch.6, p.7a.

79. WCC, ch.61, pp.7a-7b; CYTC, Vol.1, ch.5, p.7a.

80. CWC, ch.95, pt.2, p.1700. Chang's reinstatement came after the Vice-Minister of Rites, Ch'en Chün-ch'ing, had memorialised that it was not right to strip Chang Chün of his power as General Superintendent and yet keep him at Yang-chou, which was a precarious place. See hsing-chuan of Ch'en Chün-ch'ing in CWC, ch.96, p.1712; SSPM, ch.77, p.814.

the emperor was nevertheless determined that the Sung should strike a good bargain in the negotiations with the Jurchen. If those negotiations failed, he would still be able to rely on Chang Chün to carry on the war.

Peace Negotiations and the Treaty of 1164-1165

Soon after Chang's reinstatement, the Chin commander, Ho-Shih-lieh Chih-ning, once again sent a letter to the Sung government demanding the return of the four prefectures of Hai, Ssu, T'ang and Teng, a resumption of annual payments, the submission of the Sung as a vassal state to the Chin, and the return of refugees who had fled from the Central Plain. He threatened war if these conditions were not met. Hsiao-tsung showed the letter to Chang Chün, who remarked: "The Chin will attack when they are strong, and stop when they are weak. It does not make any difference whether there is peace or not!"[81] However, the general opinion of the court was in favour of pursuing the negotiations with the Chin, and when T'ang Ssu-t'ui proposed sending envoys there, he was supported by the other councillors, namely, Ch'en K'ang-po, Chou K'uei, and Hung Tsun, who believed that peace would enable the Sung state to put its own house in order before undertaking any further military action.[82] The Vice-Minister of Works, Chang Shan, appears to have been the only official at court who opposed the peace policy. Hsiao-tsung is

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81. See biography of Chang Chün, SS, ch.361, p.11309; CWC, ch.95, pt.ii, p.1700.

82. SSPM, ch.77, p.814.

said to have told Chang that although he agreed with his views, he thought it wise to play along with the enemy for the time being.[83]

It subsequently was decided to send the Officer-In-Charge of Public Affairs in Huai-hsi (Huai-hsi kan-pan Kung-shih 淮西幹辦公事), Lu Chung-hsien 盧仲賢, to see the Chin commanders. Lu carried with him a letter from the Sung government replying to the Chin demands which stated that the four prefectures in question had been recovered by the Sung after hostilities had broken out in 1161 (implying that the Sung had the right to keep them). With regard to the question of the annual payments, the letter held that although the Sung did not mind paying, they might not be able to meet the sum required since the Liang-Huai region was still recovering from the devastation of war.[84] The Sung thus were still unwilling to give in completely to the Chin demands. Indeed, before Lu Chung-hsien left on his mission in 9th/1163, Hsiao-tsung warned him not to give way on the issue of the four prefectures, although T'ang Ssu-t'ui and other pro-peace ministers apparently advised him to the contrary.[85] In one last attempt to stop the peace negotiations, Chang Chün memorialised to the effect that Lu Chung-hsien was untrustworthy and should not be sent, but his advice was disregarded. Instead, probably in an attempt to influence Chang Chün to change his hard-line attitude, Hsiao-tsung

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83. Biography of Chang Shan, SS, ch.381, p.11747; WCC, ch.61, p.7b.

84. CYTC, Vol.1, ch.20, p.9a.

85. CYTC, Vol.1, ch.20, p.9a; CWC, ch.95, pt.2, p.1701.

took Ch'ang's son, Chang Shih 張栻, to see Kao-tsung in the Te-shou palace. After inquiring about his father's attitude concerning the peace negotiations, the retired emperor told Chang Shih:

> Please tell your father that in carrying out any national campaign nowadays, one must take into consideration the strength of the people and that of the nation.... I have heard that the Khitans are fighting the Jurchen; if the Khitans are successful, we would be able to reap our profits without any effort. However, if the Chin are not faced with internal uprising, we should keep our own state in order and bide our time.[86]

At this time Hsiao-tsung appears to have been influenced by the pacifist attitude of his father. However, this does not mean that he was willing to completely bow to Chin demands. In 10th/1163 while Lu Chung-hsien was away, the emperor called upon the officials in court to discuss the four issues raised by the Chin. While different views were held by the officials, Hsiao-tsung said that he might consider giving way concerning the four prefectures and the annual payments, but he definitely would not acknowledge Chin overlordship nor return the refugees.[87] This was to remain as his attitude throughout the negotiations.

Meanwhile, Lu Chung-hsien met the Chin commanders at Su-chou. It is said that he had been so frightened by Pu-san Chung-i that instead of representing the Sung cause, he agreed to present the Chin demands to the Sung court. Therefore, on his return in

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86. HTC, ch,138, p.3674.

87. SSPM, ch.77, p.815.

11th/1163, Lu reported on the four conditions of peace laid down by the Chin, firstly, to adopt the pseudofamily relation of younger uncle and nephew (shu-chih 叔姪) instead of the former lord-vassal relation; secondly, to return the four prefectures of Hai, Ssu, T'ang and Teng; thirdly, to pay the same amount of silver and silk in the annual payments as before; and finally, to return the fugitive rebels and captives to Chin.[88] There were different reactions to Lu Chung-hsien's report. The councillors were happy with the fact that the Chin no longer insisted on the recognition of their overlordship, while Hsiao-tsung was still reluctant to alienate the prefectures of Hai and Ssu.[89] The chief councillor, T'ang Ssu-t'ui, requested that another mission under the Vice-Minister of Finance, Wang Chin-wan 王之望, and the Administrator of the Palace Postern, Lung Tu-yüan 龍大淵, be sent to inform the Chin that the Sung agreed to give up the four prefectures, but requested the annual payments be reduced by half.[90] T'ang's proposal was opposed by the General Censor, Chou Ts'ao 周操, and the Right Policy Monitor, Ch'en Liang-han 陳良翰, who were against alienating the four prefectures; they suggested that the annual payments should not be given until the territory of the imperial tombs in Ho-nan was returned to Sung, and finally, they proposed that instead of sending Wang

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88. CYTC, Vol.1, ch.20, p.9a.

89. Ibid.

90. HTC, ch.138, p.3676; tomb inscription for Ch'en Liang-han, WCC, ch.66, p.3a.

Chih-wan, a minor envoy should first be sent to negotiate with the Chin.[91]

Hsiao-tsung's disappointment with Lu Chung-hsien's mission was shown by the fact that he had Lu imprisoned and demoted soon after his return.[92] Then, upon the suggestion of the councillors, the emperor decided to call upon the officials at court to discuss the issues raised by the Chin, and at the same time to summon Chang Chün to court for his opinion. In the ensuing court discussion, the general opinion among the officials was that since the Chin did not insist on the recognition of their over-lordship, peace negotiations should be continued. However, there were a few officials who resolutely opposed the peace negotiations. The Proclamation Commissioner of Hu-pei and Ching-hsi (Hu-pei, Ching-hsi hsüan-yü shih 湖北京西諭使), Yü Yün-wen, memorialised on several occasions against the abandonment of the four prefectures; he was of the opinion that the Chin had sought peace out of their own weakness, and that it was time for the Sung to launch their counter-attack.[93] In a strongly-worded memorial, the Chancellery Imperial Recorder Hu Ch'üan denounced peace negotiations as having been responsible for many of the disasters

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91. WCC, ch.66, p.3a; CYTC, Vol.1, ch.20, p.9b.

92. It is said that Chang Chün instructed his son Chang Shih to memorialise against Lu Chung-hsien for bringing shame upon the country, and the emperor decided to have Lu punished as a result of Chang Shih's accusations. See CWC, ch.95, pt.2, p.1701; CYTC, Vol.1, ch.20, p.10b; HTC, ch.138, p.3677.

93. For Yü Yun-wen's memorials against the abandonment of the four prefectures, see SWCT, ch.58, pp.12b-14b.

faced by the Sung in the past forty years, and warned the emperor not to repeat the former mistakes for the sake of temporary security.[94] The Investigating Censor Yen An-chung 閻安中 protested that the four prefectures were crucial to Sung defence and should never be abandoned.[95] On hearing the memorials of the war advocates, T'ang Ssu-t'ui angrily denounced them:

> Thinking that the consequences /of war/ do not affect them personally, they speak boastfully and mislead the country in order to make a name for themselves. They should know that such matters of national importance are different from play-acting![96]

Hsiao-tsung then decided to carry on with the negotiations.

Chang Chün was on his way back to court when he heard the news concerning the mission of Wang Chih-wan. He immediately memorialised in protest, referring to the peace advocates as members of Ch'in Kuei's faction, and arguing that by sending peace envoys to Chin, the Sung would lose the loyalty of the fighters in the Central Plain and the admiration of the people there.[97] Chang saw the emperor in 12th/1163, and having spoken against peace negotiations, he once more requested Hsiao-tsung to move to Chien-k'ang.[98] Hsiao-tsung then sent a personally-written

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94. See Hu Ch'üan 胡銓, Hu Tan-an hsien-sheng wen-chi 胡澹菴先生文集, (Taipei: Han-hua 漢華 Company, 1970), ch.7, pp.17a-18b.

95. CYTC, Vol.1, ch.20, p.10b.

96. SSPM, ch.77, p.816.

97. For Chang Chün's memorial, see SWCT, ch.42, p.11a.

98. CWC, ch.95, pt.2, p.1702; SSPM, ch.77, p.816.

decree to Wang Chih-wan, asking him to wait for further orders at the border. Two minor officials, Hu Fang 胡昉 and Yang Yu-i 楊由義, were then sent to inform the Chin commanders that the Sung would not hand back the four prefectures and threatened to call back Wang Chih-wan and stop all peace negotiations if the Chin insisted on their demands.[99] The emperor had never been happy about losing the four prefectures (as seen by his punishment of Lu Chung-hsien), and Chang Chün must have encouraged him to adopt a tougher approach to the enemy. The fact that Hsiao-tsung still had faith in Chang Chün is shown by his appointment of Chang as Right Chief Councillor in 12th/1163, although T'ang Ssu-t'ui was promoted to the position of Left Chief Councillor to replace Ch'en K'ang-po who had recently resigned.[100] Again Hsiao-tsung appears to have intended to keep a balance between the peace and war advocates so that the court would not be dominated by T'ang and his supporters.

The decision to send Hu Fang and Yang Yu-i ahead of Wang Chih-wan led to considerable tension between the Chin and Sung in the early months of 1164. Hu and Yang were initially detained by the Jurchen on the grounds that the Sung did not comply with their

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99. CWC, ch.95, pt.2, p.1702; SSPM, ch.77, p.816.

100. Ch'en K'ang-po resigned on plea of illness, but it should be pointed out that in the recent controversy over the peace negotiations, the councillors had been accused of inefficiency by the war advocates; it is said that the councillors then sent in their resignations, but were refused by Hsiao-tsung. See YWL, ch.2, p.15a. Ch'en, however, must have been quite badly affected by the accusations that he decided to leave his top position at this time of national crisis.

wishes. On hearing that the Sung envoys were held by the enemy, Hsiao-tsung is said to have told Chang Chün that it was the will of Heaven that the peace negotiations failed, and that from then on, war appeared to be the only solution.[101] However, Hu and Yang were later released and allowed to return from Su-chou in 2nd/1164.[102] Because of Chin's refusal to consider the Sung request, Wang Chih-wan was ordered to return to Lin-an with all the payments and gifts meant for the Chin.

The breakdown of peace negotiations at this point might have led to renewed hostilities between the two states, but this was avoided by a dramatic change of events over the next few months. Chang Chün appears to have been getting ready for war by recruiting large numbers of loyalists into the army, fortifying the strategic locations and increasing the number of warships in the Chiang-Huai region.[103] However, Hsiao-tsung was beginning to have doubts. On his way back to court, Wang Chih-wan wrote a report which strongly criticized Chang Chün's war efforts. Wang mentioned that during his stay in Hsü-i he had been told by the officials there of the lack of manpower in the army, the insufficiency of financial resources and food supplies, and the lack of proper arms. He further claimed that it was unwise to

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101. CWC, ch.95, pt.2, p.1703.

102. The Chin commander, Pu-san Chung-i, referred the Sung letter to the Chin emperor, who then ordered that Hu Fang and Yang Yu-i be released, saying the envoys were not to be blamed for the change in their government's policy. See SSPM, ch.77, p.817.

103. Biography of Chang Chün, SS, ch.361, p.11310.

assign 40,000 men to defend Ssu-chou while other strategically more important locations were unguarded, pointing out that the enemy had never invaded Sung territory from Ssu-chou.[104]

Wang Chih-wan's memorial appears to have made the emperor apprehensive. Hsiao-tsung was further discouraged by the Vice-Minister of Finance, Ch'ien Tuan-li 錢端禮, who cautioned him against war, saying that the defeat at Fu-li should serve as a warning example.[105] Being worried about the strength of Sung defence, Hsiao-tsung ordered Chang Chün to inspect the army in the Chiang-Huai region. Chang was subsequently impeached by the Right Policy Monitor, Yin Se, for insubordination and misappropriation of the national funds.[106] The emperor thus decided to summon Chang back to court and send Ch'ien Tuan-li and Wang Chih-wan in his place as Pacification Commissioners of the Liang-Huai region. Consequently, Chang Chün submitted his resignation in a series of eight memorials. Hsiao-tsung then allowed him to leave with great honour by giving him the title of Junior Preceptor (shao-shih 少師) and that of Military Governor, and appointing him Governor of Fu-chou (p'an Fu-chou 判福州).[107]

The dismissal of Chang Chün from court thus paved the way for the renewal of the peace negotiations. Since the reinstatement

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104. For Wang Chih-wan's memorial, see Han-pin chi 漢濱集 (SKCP ed.), ch.6, pp.15b-17b.

105. HTC, ch.138, p.3681.

106. SSPM, ch.77, p.818; biography of Chang Chün, SS, ch.361, p.11310.

107. CWC, ch.95, pt.2, p.1704.

of Chang Chün in 8th/1163 until his departure in 4th/1164, Hsiao-tsung, although somewhat discouraged by the abortive campaign, still allowed Chang to carry out defence preparations while attempting to reach a negotiated settlement at the same time. It was after Chang's dismissal that all-out efforts were carried out to seek peace, as shown by the events in the next few months. In 5th/1164, Wu Lin was ordered not to recruit any more refugees, and in 6th/1164, Yü Yün-wen was ordered to abandon the prefectures of T'ang and Teng.[108] Yü Yün-wen protested and was subsequently dismissed.[109] In the same month, the border guards in the prefectures of Hai and Ssu were ordered to withdraw.[110] This was followed by the abandonment of the border defence in the Liang-Huai region in 7th/1164. In order to hasten the success of peace negotiations, T'ang Ssu-t'ui voluntarily abandoned the border defence, stopped building the walls in Shou-ch'un, dispersed the archers, and put a stop to the building of warships.[111]

The eighth month of 1164 saw the death of Chang Chün. In the same month, the emperor agreed to T'ang Ssu-t'ui's proposal to send the Junior Lord of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices (t'ai-ch'ang shao-ch'ing 太常少卿), Wei Ch'i 魏杞, as envoy to Chin. Wei was to carry with him a letter from the Sung emperor

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108. HTC, ch.138, p.3683.

109. For Yü Yün-wen's memorial opposing the abandonment of T'ang and Teng, see SWCT, ch.58, pp.2b-3a.

110. HTC, ch.138, p.3684.

111. SSPM, ch.77, p.818.

addressed to his "uncle", the Chin emperor. Hsiao-tsung personally gave Wei a briefing and told him that the purpose of his mission was firstly, to rectify the status of Sung (the uncle-nephew relation was formally accepted by Sung); secondly, to request for the withdrawal of the Chin forces; thirdly, to reduce the amount of annual payments; and lastly, to inform the Chin about the Sung refusal to return the refugees.[112] It thus appears that the Sung were agreeable to Chin demands regarding the slightly inferior status of their state and the continuation of annual payments, though they found the demand regarding the refugees unacceptable. Of the four issues raised by the Chin formerly, the issue of the refugees appears to have been the only problem, since by abandoning the defence of the four prefectures, the Sung had already bowed to the Chin demand over this issue.

The decision of the court to resume peace negotiations led to a strong protest by the Vice-Minister of War, Hu Ch'üan, who vigorously opposed giving up the four prefectures, especially Hai and Ssu:

> The prefectures of Hai and Ssu are equivalent to our throat. If the enemy get hold of Hai and Ssu, they are able to squeeze us to death ... thus we will not be able to hold on to the Liang-Huai region, and if so, neither are we able to defend the Yang-tzu region....[113]

He ended the memorial by calling all the officials at court women because of their lack of courage. However, in spite of Hu's

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112. Ibid., ch.77, pp.820-21.

113. For Hu Ch'üan's memorial, see Hu Tan-an hsien-sheng wen-chi, ch.8, pp.1a-4b.

vigorous protest, it was decided to send Wei Ch'i to the Chin court.

The Sung's effort for peace was not met with the same response from the Chin, who saw the slackening of Sung defences as a good opportunity for them to invade. In 8th/1164, after sending a messenger to meet Wei Ch'i at Hsü-i, the Chin commanders claimed that the Sung were not willing to comply with all their demands, and at the same time, they put forward a new demand for the prefectures of Ch'in and Shang in the north-western border.[114] On hearing reports concerning the possibility of a Chin invasion, Hsiao-tsung appointed T'ang Ssu-t'ui General Superintendent of the Chiang-Huai army (Chang Chün's former position) in 9th/1164, but T'ang declined to leave, and consequently Yang Ts'un-chung was appointed Co-Superintendent and placed in charge of defence there.[115] The Chin forces crossed the Huai in late 10th/1164 and began their invasion in 11th/1164. Ch'u-chou 楚州 (modern Huai-an hsien 淮安縣, , just south of the Huai River in Chiang-su) was attacked, and the Sung general, Wei Shen, died in defending it.[116] The fall of Ch'u-chou was followed by that of Hao-chou and Ch'u-chou 滁州 in the Huai valley as the Chin army moved southwards.[117]

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114. YWL, ch.2, pp.20b-21a.

115. CYTC, Vol.1, ch.20, p.12a.

116. SSPM, ch.77, pp.821-22.

117. Ibid.

Following the Chin invasion, T'ang Ssu-t'ui was removed from the office of General Superintendent and replaced by Yang Ts'un-chung. At that time, the general opinion of the court was to abandon the Huai and defend the Yang-tzu region, but such a policy was not carried out because of Yang Ts'un-chung's opposition.[118] Meanwhile, the former Chief Councillor, Ch'en K'ang-po, was summoned back to office. To ensure the loyalty of the refugees during this time of crisis, an edict was issued announcing that they would certainly not be deported to Chin and called upon them to join in the effort of eliminating the enemy.[119]

The national crisis led to a protest among the students of the Imperial University at this time. Seventy-two students led by Chang Kuan 張觀 sent in a petition denouncing the peace advocates, holding them responsible for the Chin invasion, and calling for their execution. On the other hand, they requested the emperor to employ Ch'en K'ang-po and Hu Ch'üan and to summon renowned war advocates such as Yü Yün-wen, Wang Ta-pao, Wang Shih-p'eng and others.[120] Since the students had sent in the petition in defiance of earlier warnings from the authorities, Hsiao-tsung was furious and intended to punish them severely. It was after much intervention on the part of the officials, including those who had been denounced by the students, that the emperor decided not to take

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118. Ibid.

119. For the text of this edict, see Hung Kua 洪适, P'an-chou wen-chi 盤洲文集 (SPTK ed.), ch.12, p.121.

120. SSPM, ch.77, p.822.

any action against them.[121]

The Chin invasion was responsible for the downfall of T'ang Ssu-t'ui. In 11th/1164, a day before the students' petition, he was dismissed from his chief-councillorship and exiled to Yung-chou永州 (Ling-ling零陵 in Hu-nan湖南) after having been accused of voluntarily neglecting Sung defences in order to hasten the success of the peace negotiations. T'ang subsequently died on the way to his place of exile.[122]

Meanwhile, the Sung decided to bow to Chin pressure. Another envoy Wang Pien王抃 was sent to the Chin camp with the message that the Sung were willing to alienate the prefectures of Shang and Ch'in after all. Also, they were willing to return the Chin captives but not those who had betrayed Chin on their own initiative (who therefore infuluded the refugees). They again confirmed their agreement to the "uncle-nephew" relation, and requested for the reduction of annual payments of silver and silk by 50,000 units each, and for the change of the humiliating term "annual tribute" (sui-kung歲貢) to "annual payment" (sui-pi歲幣).[123] The Chin commanders were agreeable to all these terms and sent Wang Pien back with their reply. By the end of 11th/1164, Wang was again sent as peace envoy to the Chin commanders carrying with him a letter from Chief Councillor Ch'en K'ang-po confirming

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121. HTC, ch.139, p.3693.

122. Biography of T'ang Ssu-t'ui, SS, ch.371, p.11531.

123. HTC, ch.139, p.3693; biography of Wang Pien, SS, ch.470, p.13692.

Sung agreement to the terms of the treaty. Thus the peace negotiations finally reached a successful conclusion.

In 12th/1164, Wei Ch'i was sent to the Chin court with a letter from Hsiao-tsung. Meanwhile, an official announcement was made concerning Wang Pien's mission and the success of the peace negotiations. The imperial proclamation stated:

> Wang Pien was recently sent to meet the Chin commanders on the banks of the Ying 潁 river .... As a result of the negotiations, the status of the Sung emperor is rectified with the establishment of the "uncle-nephew" relation, the annual payments are reduced by 100,000 units, and the borders remain the same as the former treaty.... Because of humanitarian reasons, it is also decided not to deport the fugitive rebels on both sides....[124]

The official announcement thus marked the conclusion of the peace settlement, although it was only in 1st/1165 that Wei Ch'i arrived in Chin and presented Hsiao-tsung's letter to the Chin emperor. Shih-tsung then officially agreed to the terms of the treaty and declared that war was over.[125]

It can be said that the peace settlement of 1164-65 brought some improvements to the conditions imposed on the Sung as compared to the treaty of 1141-42. The humiliation of being vassal to the Chin for the past twenty years was finally removed, even though

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124. SSPM, ch.77, p.823. This, however, represented a much shortened version of the original text of the treaty, which has not been preserved in any of the sources. See Herbert Franke, "Treaties between Sung and Chin" in Etudes Song, Ser.I, p.81.

125. See SSPM, ch.77, p.823.

the Sung still had to acknowledge the superior status of the enemy. The reduction in the annual payments (from 250,000 to 200,000 taels of silver and bolts of silk each), and the agreement of the Jurchen on the question of refugees, also represented considerable concessions on the part of Chin. However, the fact that the former borders were maintained and that the Sung had to give up their newly recovered territories means that not a single inch of their former territory had been recovered despite their efforts in the past few years. Indeed, it appears that Shih Hao and other peace advocates had been proven right over this point. For the time being, Hsiao-tsung had to be content with maintaining the status quo and putting his own state in order while waiting for opportunity to achieve his life-long ambition of reconquest.

CHAPTER IV

COURT POLITICS DURING THE CH'IEN-TAO ERA: YEARS OF RECONSTRUCTION, 1165-1173

After the conclusion of the peace settlement in 1165, the Southern Sung dynasty was to experience another four decades of military stalemate and uneasy co-existence with the Jurchen.[1] With the immediate threat of enemy invasion removed, however, frictions between the war and peace advocates, which had dominated court politics for the previous two years, were largely terminated. The year 1165 thus not only marked the end of war and uncertainty, but also signified the beginning of a new era in domestic politics. Hsiao-tsung marked the occasion by changing the reign title from Lung-hsing 隆興 (Great Prosperity)[2] to Ch'ien-tao (The Way of Heaven) the latter of which was adopted at the beginning of 1165 and continued in effect for the next nine years. During this

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1. Hostilities resumed between the Sung and Chin states in 1206-08 when the Sung chief minister, Han T'o-chou started war against the Jurchen, but the northern campaign was again abortive. For an account of the campaign, see SSPM, ch.83.

2. The reign title Lung-hsing was originally adopted by Hsiao-tsung to mean "Upholding the administration of the Shao-hsing (1131-1162, reign title of Kao-tsung) era (wu-lung shao-hsing chih-cheng 務隆紹興之政)." However, its meaning was later altered to incorporate the two reign titles of Chien-lung 建隆 (960-963, reign title of T'ai-tsu) and Shao-hsing. This title was changed two years later when Hsiao-tsung discovered that it had previously been adopted by a northern Sung rebel, Chao Shen 趙詵 (in 1102). See CHSC, Vol.1, ch.3, p.1b.

period, the emperor and his ministers embarked on new tasks which aimed at rebuilding the empire - strengthening its defences, improving the standards of both central and local administrations, developing its economic resources, and tending to the livelihood of the people in general. It was the objective of the court to put its own state in order (tzu-chih 自治) before actively considering any ambitious schemes or military campaigns to achieve reconquest. Although the objective of hui-fu was constantly borne in mind by both the emperor and the officials, the court generally refrained from any bellicose gestures after the abortive campaign of 1163.

During his twenty-seven years on the throne, Hsiao-tsung assumed as his personal responsibility three major tasks of dynasty-building, namely, founding (ch'uang-yeh) preserving (shou-ch'eng) and reviving (chung-hsing).[3] Although the task of founding the dynasty had largely been accomplished by Kao-tsung, Hsiao-tsung nevertheless considered it necessary to continue the work of his father. Similarly, the task of restoration, of reviving a dynasty after a major disaster, was accomplished not only by Kao-tsung but also by Hsiao-tsung. However, the most outstanding contribution made by Hsiao-tsung was in the realm of consolidation, the preservation of gains achieved during the previous reign which contributed to the stabilization of the Southern Sung regime. Indeed, the policies implemented during

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3. For Hsiao-tsung's reference to these three mammoth tasks of founding, preserving and reviving a dynasty, see his conversation with his ministers on p. 186 of this chapter.

the Ch'ien-tao period clearly reflect the fact that consolidation was a national priority of the time.

During these years of reconstruction, the major issues which frequently faced the court included administrative reforms, finance, defence and foreign policy. By examining the way in which the emperor and the officials dealt with these issues, we hope to get a clear picture of court politics during this period, and to see how the theme of consolidation often emerged in the discussion and formulation of both domestic and foreign policies. A study of court politics of the time also entails an examination of the relations between Hsiao-tsung and his ministers, as well as his relations with the Inner Court favourites. This provides some insight into the emperor's character, his personal ambition to achieve hui-fu, and his desire to concentrate power in his own hands, the last of which contributed to the growth of absolutism, especially towards the later part of his reign.

Hsiao-tsung has generally been recorded in history as a wise and responsible monarch, who embodied a number of key Confucian virtues, especially those of filial piety, frugality, diligence and willingness to seek the advice of his ministers on matters related to government and administration. His reign is often described as the finest of the Southern Sung, characterized by peace and prosperity. Nevertheless, it should be noted that beneath this tranquility, the court was not entirely free from tensions, strains and even outright conflicts between the emperor and his ministers, between the ministers themselves, and between the Outer Court bureaucrats and the Inner Court attendants.

Confrontations between Hsiao-tsung and the officials often arose because of disagreements over certain issues or policies. However, despite the frequent stormy scenes, Hsiao-tsung was generally broad-minded enough not to hold a grudge against the ministers when they openly criticized him. Also, it should be pointed out that for the duration of his reign, the court was largely free from truly divisive bureaucratic factionalism. It is to Hsiao-tsung's credit that he managed to keep everything under control and reduce political tensions to an acceptable level.

Hsiao-tsung and his Ministers

It is interesting to note that the Hsiao-tsung reign was one of the few during Southern Sung times which was not dominated by powerful councillors. Ministers such as Ch'in Kuei during the reign of Kao-tsung, Han T'o-chou 韓侂胄 [4] during the reign of Ning-tsung (r. 1190-1224), and Shih Mi-yüan 史彌遠 [5] during the reign of Ning-tsung and Li-tsung (r. 1225-1274), were granted so much authority by their sovereigns that they became powerful autocrats who completely dominated the bureaucracy. During Hsiao-tsung's reign, however, the emperor's power remained supreme and unchallenged. A brief account of Hsiao-tsung's relations with his ministers helps to illustrate this point.

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4. The official biography of Han T'o-chou is found in SS, ch.474, pp.13771-78.

5. The official biography of Shih Mi-yüan is found in SS, ch.414, pp.12415-18.

Following the death of Left Chief Councillor Ch'en K'ang-po in 2nd/1165, the central bureaucracy was headed by Second Privy Councillor Ch'ien Tuan-li. Other high-ranking ministers included Yü Yun-wen and Wang Kang-chung 王剛中, who were appointed Second Privy Councillor and Co-Administrator of the Military Bureau respectively in the following month. Ch'ien was related to the emperor by marriage, as his daughter was married to Hsiao-tsung's eldest son, Prince Teng (Teng-wang 鄧王). This must have put Hsiao-tsung in a somewhat awkward position, though he did not seem to mind Ch'ien staying on as councillor initially, and several officials who had expressed their uneasiness about Ch'ien's key position in government was rapidly dismissed.[6] Ch'ien was in fact eyeing the office of chief councillor, Knowing the emperor's respect for his former tutor Ch'en Chün-ch'ing who had been serving as Vice-Minister of Rites since 1st/1165, Ch'ien sought to win Ch'en over to his side by promising him a position as councillor once he himself became chief councillor. However, he was rebuffed by Ch'en, who admonished the emperor for allowing relatives of the imperial family to stay in power.[7] It is said that Hsiao-tsung accepted his advice, but the fact that Ch'en was soon

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6. See Anonymous, Sung-shih ch'üan-wen hsü tzu-chih t'ung-chien 宋史全文續資治通鑑 (SSCW) (Taipei: Wen-hai, 1969), ch.24, p.1901; hsing-chuang of Ch'en Chün-ch'ing in CWC, ch.96, p.1713; and hsing-chuang of Ch'ien Tuan-li in KKC, ch.92, p.870. It is also pointed out in the last source that the General Censor T'ang Yao-feng 唐堯封 was demoted to be Junior Lord of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices for having criticized Ch'ien that as a relative of the emperor, he should not be holding a councillor position.

7. CWC, ch.96, p.1713.

demoted to a prefectural position[8] shows that Ch'ien remained in the emperor's favour. Nevertheless, when Prince Teng was made heir-apparent in 8th/1165, Ch'ien was finally obliged to step down from the position of Second Privy Councillor.[9] Being an astute politician, Hsiao-tsung must have realized that it was unwise to keep Ch'ien in power since he was now the father-in-law of the heir to the throne.

The departure of Ch'ien Tuan-li might also have been due to Hsiao-tsung's concern about certain flaws in Ch'ien's character. It is said that a man from Ssu-ch'uan called Li Hung 李宏 had previously approached the councillors of state to grant him an official position. While Ch'ien was willing to comply with his request, however, Yü Yün-wen was reluctant to do so. Ch'ien subsequently told the emperor that Yü had accepted a bribe from Li Hung in return for an official post. A censor, Chang Fu 章服, thereupon impeached Yü on this charge, and the latter was dismissed in early 8th/1165. However, Hsiao-tsung subsequently discovered that it was Ch'ien rather than Yü who had accepted the bribe and decided that Ch'ien should leave. At the same time, Li Hung was exiled and Chang Fu was demoted.[10]

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8. Ch'en Chün-ch'ing was dismissed from his court position in the autumn of 1165. See SSCW, ch.24, p.1901; CWC, ch.96, p.1713.

9. KKC, ch.92, p.871; HTC, ch.139, p.3706.

10. For an account of this incident, see the tomb inscription for Yü Yun-wen in Yang Wan-li 楊萬里, Ch'eng-chai chi 誠齋集 (CCC) SPTK ed., ch.120, p.1070.

With the departure of both Second Privy Councillors Ch'ien Tuan-li and Yü Yün-wen, Hung Kua 洪适, who became the next Second Privy Councillor, was able to rise to the position of Right Chief Councillor in 12th/1165. Despite his rapid promotion in the civil service,[11] his performance as chief councillor apparently did not satisfy the emperor, who dismissed him several months later.[12] A primary concern of Hsiao-tsung at this time was the efficiency of the councillors. In 5th/1166, he is reported to have said to them, "Recently many officials have pointed out that the councillors are not fulfilling their responsibilities; you should therefore work harder...."[13] Hsiao-tsung proved to be a rather demanding emperor, who did not hesitate to dismiss his ministers if they failed to measure up to his expectations.

The frequent dismissals of councillors and other officials led to much criticism of the emperor's personnel policy. For example, in 9th/1166, the Lesser Lord of Agricultural Supervision (ssu-nung shao-ch'ing 司農少卿) Mo Chi 莫濟 said to Hsiao-tsung:

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11. For the rapid rise of Hung Kua in his civil service career, see his tomb inscription in WCC, ch.68, p.5b; CYTC, Vol.2, ch.8, p.1b.

12. During his several months in office, Chief Councillor Hung Kua was noted for his policy of reducing military expenditure and retrenchment of personnel. Most of all he was known for encouraging the emperor to carry out the policy of interviewing appointees to prefectural positions, which became a regular practice during Hsiao-tsung's reign. See WCC, ch.68, pp.6a-6b.

13. CHSC, ch.29, p.2b.

> The way of government depends on the appointment of /the right/ personnel, while the appointment of personnel depends on the fulfilling of responsibilities /by the personnel concerned/. If we appoint the officials but do not keep them in office for a sufficiently long period, we will not be able to judge the excellencies of the good and the capable; on the other hand, the evil and unworthy officials manage to go unpunished....[14]

He then went on to criticize the emperor for dismissing the councillors and other officials after they had served for only a few months. Although Hsiao-tsung commended Mo for his criticism, he still carried on as before. In addition to being dissatisfied with their performance, it could well be that having personally witnessed the great power wielded by the chief councillor Ch'in Kuei during his father's reign,[15] Hsiao-tsung was especially careful that there should not be a recurrence during his own time on the throne. A convenient way to restrict the growth of councillor power would be to limit the tenure of their office, so that they would not have the opportunity to build up their own power base in court and thus constitute a threat to imperial power.

Besides frequently removing the councillors, Hsiao-tsung also sought to keep them under control by not granting them their due authority. In 12th/1166 the emperor finally filled every

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14. Ibid., ch.29, p.5b.

15. The enmity between Hsiao-tsung and Ch'in Kuei is illustrated by an incident in 1154 when the prince exposed the chief councillor's dishonesty for deliberately keeping the emperor uninformed about the suppression of a certain uprising. Hsiao-tsung is also said to have cautioned Kao-tsung about Ch'in's intention to make his son succeed him as chief councillor. See CYTC, Vol.2, ch.1, p.9a.

vacancy in the Council of State by appointing both the Left and Right Chief Councillors and two assistant councillors. The bureaucracy was generally pleased with the appointment of these key officials, but the remarks of the Vice-Minister of War, Ch'en Yen-hsiao 陳嚴肖, reveal a certain sceptism:

> Your Majesty's recent appointments of the Left and Right Chief Councillors and the assistant councillors have led to much jubilation among the officials, who rejoice that the right men have been found to lead the government. However, in my opinion, the councillors should be given more power so that they can take up the responsibility of governing the empire.[16]

From this, we know some officials were already concerned about the lack of authority of the councillors. Although Hsiao-tsung is said to have heeded Ch'en's advice, he never actually put it into practice, and a chief complaint among the officials was the tendency of the emperor to impinge upon their authority throughout his reign.

On the other hand, Hsiao-tsung appears to have realized the importance of accommodating his councillors by giving them the psychological satisfaction of being respected and given full executive authority in principle, although this might not turn out to be the case in practice. Thus, ironically, it was during Hsiao-tsung's reign that the councillors were given much power, at least on paper. Soon after his accession in 12th/1162, for example, Hsiao-tsung appointed the chief councillors to the concurrent positions of Commissioners of Military Affairs, thus

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16. CHSC, ch.29, pp.12a-12b.

formally assigning them with military authority.[17] A few years later, in 12th/1166, the chief councillors were further granted financial authority when they were given the concurrent title of Controller of National Finance (chih kuo-yung shih 制國用使).[18] It thus appears there was a concentration of civil, military and financial powers in the hands of the chief councillors. Indeed, such concentration of powers has been seen as an important factor in the rise of powerful councillors during the Southern Sung.[19] Yet, as will be seen, this was not the case during Hsiao-tsung's reign.

Besides intending to raise the morale of his councillors, Hsiao-tsung's main purpose in granting military and financial authority to his chief councillors was to enable the top

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17. During the Northern Sung there were a few occasions, during times of emergency, when the chief councillors were appointed to concurrent positions in the Bureau of Military Affairs, but it was not until 1130 that they were appointed on a regular basis. But after the death of Ch'in Kuei in 1155, the concurrent title of Commissioner of Military Affairs held by the chief councillors was again abolished. The title was restored to the chief councillors after the accession of Hsiao-tsung. See Ma Tuan-lin 馬端臨, Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao 文獻通考 (WHTK), (Shanghai: Shang-wu, 1936), ch.58, p.528.

18. Hsü Tzu-ming 徐自明, Sung tsai-fu pien-nien lu 宋宰輔編年錄 (Taipei: Wen-hai, 1967), ch.17, p.1542. For an account of the office of the Controller of National Finance, see Hsü Sung 徐松 comp., Sung hui-yao chi-kao 宋會要輯稿 (SHY), (Peking: Chung-hua, 1957), chih-kuan 6: 20-6; 21, pp.2506-7; CYTC, Vol.1, ch.10, pp.3b-4a.

19. See Lin T'ien-wei 林天蔚, "Sung-tai ch'üan-hsiang hsing-ch'eng ti feng-hsi" 宋代權相形成的分析 in Ssu yü yen 思與言, Vol.10, No.3 (1973), pp.350-360; see also Liang T'ien-hsi 梁天錫, "Lun Sung tsai-fu hu-chien chih-tu" 論宋代宰輔互兼制度, in SSYCC, Vol.4 (1969), p.294.

executives to carry out their administrative functions effectively. Apart from these, it was not his intention that his ministers should exercise such powers in reality. It should be noted that Hsiao-tsung was in the habit of guarding his imperial prerogatives jealously and frequently exercising them, especially in military matters. This was revealed by the Secretariat Imperial Recorder Hung Mai, who remarked in 12th/1166 that the imperial orders issued to the Bureau of Military Affairs frequently went straight on to the Imperial Chancellery, bypassing the Imperial Secretariat (which means that the orders were passed without the knowledge or approval of the councillors, who were the heads of the Imperial Secretariat). Hung then requested that all orders issued to the Military Bureau should go through the proper procedure.[20] Although Hsiao-tsung promised to rectify this, the so-called confidential matters of the Military Bureau (shu-mi chi-su shih 樞密機速事) were still to be dispatched directly to the Chancellery without going through the Secretariat. These were referred to as "confidential orders" (mi-pai 密旨).[21] Besides the use of "confidential orders", Hsiao-tsung also employed similar methods to enhance his ultimate power. Notable among these were the use of "palace orders" (nei-p'i 內批) and "imperial decrees" (yü-pi 御筆), both of which were issued directly from the

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20. CHSC, ch.29, pp.11b-12a.

21. Ibid.

palace, without prior consultation with the councillors.[22]

The emperor's disregard of routine procedure caused much concern among the officials. Ch'en Chün-ch'ing was one of the most outspoken ministers and he frequently confronted Hsiao-tsung over various issues regarding national policies and the emperor's personal conduct. He was noted for his vigilance against any infringement of bureaucratic power by the emperor. For example, on the eve of his appointment as chief councillor in 10th/1168, Ch'en had a serious row with Hsiao-tsung over the matter of secret orders issued to the army without the knowledge of the ministers at court. The emperor had earlier sent a Commander of the Palace Guards (tien-ch'ien chih-hui shih 殿前指揮使) Wang Ch'i 王琪 to inspect the walls in th殿前指揮使on. After Wang's return, a report was received from Yang-chou stating that more walls had been built according to the imperial order transmitted by Wang Ch'i earlier. Ch'en Chün-ch'ing immediately questioned Hsiao-tsung on the matter since such an order had not been sent out officially. Ch'en then insisted that Wang should be severely punished for falsely transmitting imperial orders, and consequently, Wang was stripped of his rank and dismissed.[23]

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22. Both nei-p'i and yü-pi were imperial orders issued directly from the palace. These direct orders were traditionally known as nei-p'i, but the latter term yü-pi was used since the Ch'ung-ning 崇寧 and Ta-kuan 大觀 eras (reign-titles of Hui-tsung, lasting from 1102-1110). These orders were not necessarily written by the emperor himself and were therefore different from the "personally-written decrees" (ch'in-pi 親筆). See CYTC, Vol.2, ch.11, p.1a.

23. For an account of this episode, see CWC, ch.96, p.1716; SSCW, ch.25, pp.1943-44.

The above episode was merely the prelude to an even greater confrontation between Hsiao-tsung and Ch'en Chün-ch'ing. Ch'en and his colleagues in the Council of State had formerly been unhappy about the emperor sending confidential orders to the army and had requested that all departments receiving imperial orders issued directly from the palace (yü-pi) should first memorialise the court for verification before implementing them. Such a request was again made by the ministers after the Wang Ch'i incident. Hsiao-tsung initially agreed but changed his mind two days later, much to the frustration of the ministers. Obviously the emperor was unwilling to give up his imperial prerogatives and tried to evade the issue by remarking, "Even when the palace wishes to get a drink or some food, it has to obtain court verification; now, would that not be over-restraining!" Ch'en Chün-ch'ing protested that the ministers were concerned with much more important matters, such as requesting that military matters be notified to the Bureau of Military Affairs and financial matters be notified to the Three Departments. He argued that, after all, the court belonged to the emperor, and the ministers were merely carrying out the emperor's orders, and that court verification of all matters meant that ultimate decision still lay in the hands of the emperor. Finally he expressed his fear that the emperor had changed his mind after being influenced by elements within the palace. Such strongly-worded criticism infuriated Hsiao-tsung, but Ch'en was unwilling to yield.[24]

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24. CWC, ch.96, pp.1716-17; SSCW, ch.25, pp.1944-45.

Ch'en Chün-ch'ing was not the only minister who took up the matter of imperial orders with Hsiao-tsung. Indeed, the Co-Administrator of the Military Bureau Liu Kung, so offended the emperor with his vehement protest that the latter decided to dismiss him.[25] Ch'en then pleaded for Liu's retention, but Hsiao-tsung refused to change his mind. Finally, due to Ch'en's insistence that Liu be given at least an important prefectural position, Hsiao-tsung appointed him Pacification Commissioner of Chiang-hsi (Chiang-hsi an-fu-shih 江西安撫使).[26] After this, Ch'en submitted a self-impeaching memorial for having annoyed the emperor, but Hsiao-tsung refused to allow him to resign. Though frequently offended by Ch'en's criticism, the emperor nevertheless recognised him as a righteous and responsible minister. Thus a few days after this exchange, Ch'en was even promoted to be Right Chief Councillor.[27]

The above incident clearly illustrates the clash between imperial power and ministerial power. While Hsiao-tsung intended to concentrate power in his own hands through the use of secret orders, Ch'en Chün-ch'ing and Liu Kung opposed such practices by insisting on court verification before implementation. On this occasion, Hsiao-tsung's anger was much aroused by the opposition

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25. It is said that Liu was especially outspoken during the above incident. See hsing-chuang of Liu Kung, CWC, ch.97, p.1729.

26. CWC, ch.97, p.1729; SSCW, ch.25, pp.1945-46.

27. CWC, ch.96, p.1717; SSCW, ch.25, p.1946.

of his ministers, and he gave vent to his frustration by punishing Liu Kung. On the other hand, Ch'en Chün-ch'ing, who shared Liu's views, was promoted. In so doing, Hsiao-tsung showed that he was not completely indifferent to criticism and would reward ministers for their loyalty in spite of the fact that they sometimes displeased him in their speech.

Indeed, despite his autocratic tendencies, Hsiao-tsung tried to project the image of an enlightened and open-minded monarch. He often encouraged the officials to speak their minds and even invited criticism of himself. For example, in 12th/1165, the Chancellery Imperial Recorder Chiang Fei 蔣芾 , who had been newly appointed Drafting Official of the Secretariat on probation, told Hsiao-tsung apologetically that as a drafting official who had the power of veto, he was afraid he might occasionally offend the emperor while carrying out his official duties. Thereupon Hsiao-tsung replied that this was exactly what he expected from the drafting official, and that Chiang should not confine himself to commenting on political matters and appointments but could also criticize the ruler if the latter had any faults.[28] However, it should be remembered that although Hsiao-tsung did try to be receptive to criticism, he did not always live up to this ideal.

Hsiao-tsung did, however, make it a point to keep in close touch with his ministers. In 5th/1165, he expressed his regrets to the councillors that he could not afford more time with them during the morning court sessions and proposed inviting them to

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28. SSCW, ch.24, p.1911.

the palace in the evening to discuss the "way of government" (chih-tao 治道).[29] Policy discussions were frequently held between Hsiao-tsung and his ministers in the Hsüan-te 選德 Palace Hall.[30] The cordial relations between the emperor and his ministers were especially noted during the period of Yü Yün-wen's chief-councillorship (from 8th/1169 to 9th/1172). For instance, in 2nd/1171, Hsiao-tsung said to the councillors:

> During the time of the founding ancestors, the councillors had frequently been invited to join in various leisurely activities by the emperor .... On the days when I am free, I would like to invite you over for a game of archery and to wine and dine together.

When Yü and his colleagues praised Hsiao-tsung for his willingness to spend time with them, the emperor replied that it was important for the ruler and the ministers to be close so as to be able to communicate with each other. He again emphasized that since the morning court sessions were too short for any detailed discussion of government, he wished to spend more time with them so that they could carry on their discussions in a more leisurely manner.[31]

In an attempt to streamline the administration and bring about a more effective government, Hsiao-tsung initiated a number of political reforms in 1172. In the second month of that year, the title of the chief councillors was changed from that of Left and Right Executives of the Department of Ministries (shang-shu

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29. Ibid., ch.24, p.1902.

30. "Hsüan-te tien chi" 選德殿記 in WCC, ch.104, p.10b.

31. SSCW, ch.25, p.1980.

tso-yu p'u-yeh 尚書左右僕射) to that of Left and Right Chief Ministers (tso-yu ch'eng-hsiang 左右丞相).[32] The ostensible reason given by the emperor for this change was that he was unhappy with the term p'u-yeh[33] for he felt that as heads of the bureaucracy, the chief councillors should be properly addressed. On the other hand, the term ch'eng-hsiang (which is a close equivalent of the term "prime-minister") would, in his opinion, accord proper respect to the chief councillors.[34] At the same time, Hsiao-tsung reorganized the civil administration by

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32. CHSC, ch.51, p.3b. The emperor in fact ordered his ministers to discuss the rectification in chief councillor title in 12th/1171 and was opposed by Chief Councillor Yü Yün-wen on the grounds that the term ch'eng-hsiang was adopted by the Jurchen. Nevertheless, despite his opposition, Hsiao-tsung went ahead with the rectification in 2nd/1172. At the same time it was also announced that Liang K'e-chia 梁克家 was made Right Chief Councillor and Yü Yün-wen (who had served as sole chief councillor for some time and was becoming unpopular because he assumed sole authority over the government) was appointed Left Chief Councillor. See WCC, ch.14, pp.9a-11a.

33. Hsiao-tsung's objection to the term p'u-yeh was because it was originally a minor office during the Ch'in dynasty and did not carry much responsibility. The post became increasingly important after the Eastern Han, but this does not mean that the holder of such a position had become head of the bureaucracy. For the evolution of the office of p'u-yeh, see WHTK, ch.51, pp.470-71.

34. In the past the chief councillors had been known by different names, such as ch'eng-hsiang during the Ch'in and Han dynasties, and p'u-yeh during the T'ang and Northern Sung dynasties. For a short time during the reign of Hui-tsung of the Northern Sung, they were known as t'ai-tsai 太宰 and shao-tsai 少宰 (Left and Right Chief Councillor respectively), but the term p'u-yeh was once again adopted during the Southern Sung, until Hsiao-tsung changed it to ch'eng-hsiang. Thereafter the term ch'eng-hsiang remained in use for the duration of the Southern Sung dynasty. For an account of the titles of chief councillors, see WHTK, ch.49, pp.449-51, ch.51, pp.470-71; CYTC, Vol.1, ch.10, pp.1a-1b.

eliminating the top administrative posts in the Three Departments and making subordinate officers directly responsible to the chief councillor's office.[35] By so doing, the emperor sought to reduce the great number of intermediaries in the bureaucratic hierarchy and enhance the responsiveness of lower-ranking officials to the top.

Nevertheless, although in principle the above reforms expanded the authority of the councillors, in practice Hsiao-tsung exerted such rigorous control over the councillors that most were reduced to virtual sycophants. Councillors with strong views such as Shih Hao and Ch'en Chün-ch'ing soon left office and were replaced by others who were more agreeable to the emperor. With the top seats occupied by men easily manipulated by the throne, Hsiao-tsung thus managed to maintain effective personal command over the entire bureaucratic machine.

Like Kao-tsung before him, Hsiao-tsung was also noted for using censorial power against the ministers. Right from the beginning of his reign, he found the practice of dismissing councillors through censorial impeachment expedient, and frequently made use of the censorial organ to bring about the downfall of these top officials. In examining the reasons for

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35. Soon after the rectification of the chief councillor's title, it was announced that the various titles held formerly by chief councillors of state such as Chancellor (shih-chung 侍中), Secretary-General of the Secretariat (chung-shu ling 中書令) and Presiding Minister of the Department of Ministries (shang-shu ling 尚書令) were to be abolished and their functions assumed by the Left and Right Chief Councillors. See CHSC, ch.51, p.4a.

the removal of councillors from office, one finds that many of them were dismissed through censorial impeachment after they had fallen out of the emperor's favour. By resorting to the use of censorial power against ministerial power, Hsiao-tsung was able to greatly enhance his own authority.

Hsiao-tsung and the Inner Court

Another method employed by Hsiao-tsung for the same purpose was to use Inner Court personnel as a counter-weight to the regular bureaucracy. Because of their proximity to the throne and the tendency of the emperor to regard them as his confidants, the palace attendants were a constant source of anxiety for the ministers of the Outer Court. Hsiao-tsung had indeed shown great favour to certain members of the Inner Court and occasionally used them to interfere in the normal operations of the bureaucracy. It is therefore not surprising that the emperor's favours to the so-called "close attendants" (chin-hsi) in the Inner Court frequently led to protests among the officials.

During Hsiao-tsung's time on the throne there were several occasions when the Outer Court officials seriously quarreled with the Inner Court attendants. Soon after his accession in 6th/1162, Hsiao-tsung appointed two of his favourite palace attendants, Lung Ta-yüan and Tseng Ti 曾覿, Assistant General Transmitter of Directives in the Military Bureau (shu-mi fu-tu ch'eng-chih 樞密副都承旨) and Bearer-of-Arms (tai yu-ch'i-hsieh 帶弓·器械) respectively.[36] Both Lung and Tseng had won the

36. CYTC, Vol.2, ch.6, p.1a.

confidence of Hsiao-tsung while he was still crown prince, but they were extremely unpopular among the regular bureaucrats, who regarded them as petty men and sycophants. In 3rd/1163, for example, they were impeached by the Right Policy Critic Adviser (yu chien-i ta-fu 右諫議大夫) Liu Tu 劉度, who accused them of manipulating affairs in the palace and requested that they be dismissed. Instead the emperor appointed them Administrators of the Palace Postern, a position which appeared to be lower in rank than their previous appointments but nonetheless important as it would allow them easy access to the emperor and would give them the opportunity to influence imperial decisions. Liu then resigned in protest, saying that he could no longer stay on as a policy-criticism official since his advice had not been heeded by the emperor.[37] Liu was supported by others including drafting officials, a censor and a Second Privy Councillor, who all indicated their opposition to the appointments of Lung and Tseng.[38]

Hsiao-tsung was much angered by this combined attack upon his favourites and commented to Chief Councillor Shih Hao that the officials would not have dared do such a thing during the reign of

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37. CYTC, Vol.2, ch.6, p.1b; HTC, ch.183, pp.3662-63.

38. Among those who protested were the Second Privy Councillor Chang T'ao 張燾, the Drafting Official of the Imperial Secretariat Chang Chen 張震, General Censor Hu I 胡沂, Reviewing Policy Adviser Chin An-chieh 金安節 and Chancellery Imperial Recorder Chou Pi-ta, who was also serving as Reviewing Policy Adviser and Drafting Official of the Imperial Secretariat on probation. See CYTC, Vol.2, ch.6, pp.2a-2b; HTC, ch.138, p.3663. For the joint statement of Chou Pi-ta and Chin An-chieh opposing the appointments of Lung and Tseng, see WCC, ch.99, pp.17a-18b.

Kao-tsung.[39] Suspecting the officials of factionalism, he had them dismissed one by one. And although the appointments of Lung and Tseng were temporarily withdrawn, Hsiao-tsung eventually appointed them Administrators of the Palace Postern in 8th/1163.[40] They remained in these positions for the next few years despite frequent criticism against them.

Among the Outer Court ministers, Ch'en Chün-ch'ing in particular was noted for his opposition to the emperor's favourites.[41] In 2nd/1167, just two months after his appointment as Co-Administrator of the Military Bureau, Ch'en had his first confrontation with the emperor over this issue. The incident sparked off when Ch'en heard from the Secretariat Imperial Recorder Hung Mai that the latter had received news about official appointments. When asked where he obtained his information, Hung replied that it had come from Lung Ta-yüan and Tseng Ti. On hearing this, Ch'en immediately sprang into action by informing his colleagues in the Council of State that he had obtained evidence regarding the revelation of confidential matters by Lung and Tseng; thereupon all the councillors agreed that they should bring this matter up to the throne. Still unable to contain his indignation, Ch'en personally questioned Hsiao-tsung, who denied

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39. CYTC, Vol.2, ch.6, pp.2a-2b; WCC, ch.99, p.20a.

40. HTC, ch.138, p.3674.

41. Lung Ta-yüan had sought the friendship of Ch'en Chün-ch'ing but was rebuffed by the latter. See CHSC, ch.29, p.12b; CWC, ch.96, p.1714.

that he had ever consulted Lung and Tseng regarding official appointments. The emperor further commended Ch'en for his loyalty and promised that he would have the two attendants dismissed. Consequently, Lung and Tseng were both given prefectural appointments, much to the joy of the officials.[42] Thus on this occasion at least, the councillors scored a victory against the emperor's favourites. Hsiao-tsung most probably considered it unwise to go against the wishes of the ministers since they had obtained evidence against his favourites. He might also have felt that the palace attendants had gone too far in exercising their power, and decided to teach them a lesson.

However, despite his punishment of Lung Ta-yüan and Tseng Ti, Hsiao-tsung still reserved a soft spot for them. After Lung's death in 7th/1168, Hsiao-tsung took pity on Tseng and considered summoning him back to court. He was admonished by both the Second Privy Councillor Ch'en Chün-ch'ing and the Co-Administrator of the Military Bureau Liu Kung, who shared Ch'en's intense dislike and distrust of the Inner Court favourites. Liu said to Hsiao-tsung:

> These people are mere servants, so if Your Majesty pities them, it is all right to shower them with expensive gifts. But if Your Highness were to bring them close to Your side, giving them an opportunity to interfere with the appointment and dismissal of officials, I am afraid that would not be the way to increase Your imperial virtue or strengthen governmental principles at court.[43]

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42. For an account of this incident, see CWC, ch.96, p.1714; CYTC, Vol.2, ch.6, pp.5a-5b.

43. CWC, ch.97, p.1729; CYTC, Vol.2, ch.6, p.5b.

Similarly, Ch'en Chün-ch'ing told the emperor, "Since Your Majesty dismissed these two persons from court, everyone praised you for Your imperial virtue. Now that you wish to summon Tseng Ti back; I am afraid the whole nation will be disappointed."[44] He then threatened to resign, and faced with this opposition from his ministers, Hsiao-tsung decided not to summon Tseng on this occasion. However, soon after Ch'en Chün-ch'ing left office in 5th/1170, Tseng was able to find his way back to court, where no one dared speak against him.[45] He rose rapidly in power during the next decade as the emperor bestowed upon him numerous favours and honorary titles.

Apart from opposing Tseng Ti, Ch'en Chün-ch'ing was also highly vigilant against the Inner Court personnel gaining power through other means. He was especially concerned about the palace attendants coming into contact with the generals. In 8th/1167, the commander of the Chen-chiang 鎮江 army, Ch'i Fang, was dismissed for oppressing his soldiers with forced labour and services. Ch'en Chün-ch'ing then brought to the emperor's notice the fact that certain members of the Inner Court had connections with Ch'i. Hsiao-tsung replied that he was aware of this and that not only should Ch'i not be pardoned for his crimes, but those who had connections with him should also be punished as a warning to others. Subsequently, two of the Inner Court attendants, Ch'en Yao 陳瑤 and Li Tsung-hui 李宗回, were accused of having

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44. CHSC, ch.47, p.4b; CWC, ch.96, p.1716.

45. CHSC, ch.48, p.10b.

received bribes from Ch'i, and were demoted and exiled. An edict was then issued prohibiting the military officials from befriending the Inner Court attendants, threatening severe punishment for future offenders.[46]

Following the above incident, Hsiao-tsung told his ministers that the commander of the Chien-k'ang army, Liu Yüan 劉源, was also guilty of bribing palace personnel, and that he was thinking of having Liu dismissed. The emperor further said that he intended to send Wang Pien (another of his palace favourites) to Chien-k'ang to investigate Liu's crimes and to stay with the army there for a few months to ensure that the new commander would not commit the same offences. Ch'en Chün-ch'ing immediately opposed such a proposal, saying that if the commanders were carefully selected, the offences would naturally be eliminated. Hsiao-tsung replied that it was exactly because such good commanders had not been available that he proposed sending Wang Pien. Ch'en Chün-ch'ing replied:

> If the right person has not been found, we should all the more take care in our selection. After having been appointed, the army commanders should be trusted. If we were to show our mistrust even before their appointment, that is not the way the court should treat the generals....[47]

He further showed his utter mistrust for the emperor's favourite by saying that if Wang Pien happened to be unreliable, the offences would be committed by him rather than by the generals.[48]

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46. SSCW, ch.24, p.1934.

47. CWC, ch.96, p.1715; CHSC, ch.46, p.12a.

48. CWC, ch.96, p.1715; CHSC, ch.46, p.12b.

Hsiao-tsung's intention in sending Wang was undoubtedly to exert his personal control over the army commanders. But his plan was again thwarted by Ch'en Chün-ch'ing, who resisted every move by the emperor to increase imperial power at the expense of the civil and military officials.

Besides Tseng Ti and Lung Ta-yüan, one other prominent palace favourite of Hsiao-tsung was Chang Yüeh, who was the husband of the empress dowager's younger sister. In 3rd/1171, the emperor promoted Chang from his position as Administrator of the Palace Postern to that of Signatory Official of the Military Bureau.[49] The appointment of a minor palace official to such a high-ranking position led to much commotion in court. The Lecturer-In-Waiting Chang Shih submitted a memorial admonishing Hsiao-tsung; at the same time, he reproached Chief Councillor Yü Yün-wen for allowing this to happen.[50] The Drafting Official of the Imperial Secretariat, Fan Ch'eng-ta 范成大, also opposed the appointment by refusing to endorse it.[51] The emperor was obliged to compromise by giving Chang a sinecure and the honorary title of Military Governor (chieh-tu shih). Nevertheless, Hsiao-tsung was still determined to get Chang into the Military

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49. HTC, ch.142, p.3795.

50. Chang is said to have told Yü Yün-wen, "The appointment of eunuchs to councillor positions started with Ts'ai Ching and Wang Fu 王黼 (bad last ministers of Northern Sung) while the appointment of close attendants to councillor positions started with you, sir." See ibid.

51. Tomb inscription for Fan Ch'eng-ta in WCC, ch.61, pp.18b-19a; HTC, ch.142, p.3796.

Bureau, which he succeeded in doing a year later.

In 2nd/1172, Chang Yüeh was once again appointed Signatory Official of the Military Bureau, by which time Chang Shih had been dismissed from court and was serving as a prefectural administrator.[52] Fan Ch'eng-ta too had left court and was given a prefectural position.[53] Although Hsiao-tsung may therefore have thought there would not be any strong opposition to this appointment, such was not to be. Indeed, when the appointment was announced, it was opposed by various censorial and drafting officials.[54] The emperor was undeterred by their opposition, however, and the officials were either dismissed or demoted for their defiance. It is important to note that the chief councillor Yü Yün-wen remained non-commital throughout the entire incident, and his toleration of the emperor's favourites and his general support for the emperor's policies must have helped him to rise in Hsiao-tsung's favour. In any event, he served for a longer

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52. Chang was eventually ousted from office because of his opposition to Chief Councillor Yü Yun-wen and the Inner Court favourites. See his hsing-chuang in CWC, ch.89, p.1579.

53. WCC, ch.61, p.19a.

54. These include the General Censor Li Heng 李衡, Right Policy Monitor Wang Hsi-lü 王希呂, Vice-Minister of Rites and concurrently Auxiliary Academician Chou Pi-ta and Reviewing Adviser Mo Chi. See HTC, ch.143, p.3811. For Chou Pi-ta's memorial, see WCC, ch.10, pp.12b-14a.

period than most of his colleagues at the time.[55]

In examining Hsiao-tsung's relations with the Inner Court, it is found that during the Ch'ien-tao period, because of the strong opposition of ministers such as Ch'en Chün-ch'ing and Liu Kung to the palace personnel, the emperor was on the whole more restrained in bestowing favours upon his attendants. However, towards the later part of his reign, the palace favourites became more influential as they faced less opposition from the top officials in the government.

Financial Policy

In addition to the consolidation of imperial power, the Ch'ien-tao era also witnessed the consolidation of the empire in other fields. Like his predecessor Kao-tsung, Hsiao-tsung realized the great importance of finance in building up the Southern Sung regime. The emperor's concern for financial administration was reflected by the fact that one of his first acts after his accession to the throne was to check on the

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55. Yü Yün-wen left his position as chief councillor in 9th/1172. In 4th/1172, two months after the rectification in chief councillor title and the appointment of Liang K'e-chia as the Right Chief Councillor, the Palace Censor Hsiao Chih-min 蕭之敏 , sensing that Yü was losing imperial favour, brought about a vigorous attack upon Yü. Yü resigned after Hsiao's impeachment but was reinstated through the intervention of Kao-tsung. Nevertheless, Hsiao's severe impeachment must have prompted Yü's resignation several months later. See the epitaph (mu-chih-ming 墓誌銘) for Hsiao Chih-min in WCC, ch.33, pp.10b-11a; HTC, ch.143, p.3814.

accounts of the Ministry of Finance.[56] His thorough investigation of the income and expenditure of the above ministry led to the protest of its Vice-Minister Chou K'uei 周葵 in 1st/1163. In his memorial Chou referred to the emperor's queries on the "minor details" of financial matters and attributed the imperial action to instigation from the "petty elements" at court (an obvious attack upon Lung Ta-yüan and Tseng Ti).[57] Besides being apprehensive about the influence these imperial favourites possibly had upon the emperor, Chou K'uei and other officials in opposing Hsiao-tsung's interest in the details of financial administration, appear to imply that His Majesty should involve himself with greater tasks than with such mundane matters. Indeed, there existed certain differences in opinion between the emperor and the scholar-officials on the importance of finance. Hsiao-tsung was unhappy about the general indifference shown by the scholar-officials towards financial administration and criticized them for their attitude. For example, in 1st/1167 the emperor expressed his concern over the fact that the Confucian scholar-officials were ignorant about finance and agriculture and indicated his wish that they should devote more attention to such matters.[58] Also,

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56. Soon after his accession, Hsiao-tsung frequently summoned finance officials into the palace and carefully examined the finance and revenue of the empire; he also personally checked the accounts books of the various treasuries. See CYTC, Vol.2, ch.3, p.6a.

57. Tomb inscription for Chou K'uei, WCC, ch.63, p.9a; HTC, ch.138, p.3660.

58. CHSC, ch.46, p.1a.

in 8th/1171 Hsiao-tsung severely criticized the scholar-officials for refraining from discussing matters regarding finance and agriculture, even though these formed the essential livelihood of the state.[59]

Holding strongly to the view that agriculture was the foundation of the state,[60] Hsiao-tsung frequently emphasized the importance of agrarian matters. He had on numerous occasions admonished the prefectural officials to play a more active role in promoting agriculture. In 8th/1164 the administrators of various prefectures in the Chiang-Che 江浙 region were ordered to look into the irrigation and farming of their respective territories.[61] Irrigation projects were subsequently carried out in the various prefectures of the region.[62] The emperor also made it a point to advise new appointees who came to court for an imperial audience before leaving for their prefectural posts to pay more attention to farming and sericulture. His personal interest in agriculture was also indicated by his following Kao-tsung's example in practising grain-cultivation and sericulture in the palace compound.[63] The imperial concern for agrarian matters could also

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59. CHSC, ch.50, pp.17a-17b.

60. In one of his discussions with his ministers in 4th/1172, Hsiao-tsung emphasized the point that "to devote oneself to agriculture is the basis of government" (wu-nung wei chih chih-pen 務農為治之本). See ibid., ch.51, p.10b.

61. SHY, shih-huo 食貨 61:116, p.5931; HTC, ch.138, p.3689.

62. SHY, shih-huo, 61:117, p.5932.

63. CHSC, ch.59, p.13a. In 1st/1182 a new crop of wheat which had been successfully experimented in the palace farm was introduced to farmers in the various circuits of the empire. See ibid., ch.59, pp.14a-14b.

be seen from the many occasions when he genuinely expressed joy over good harvests and anxiety when adverse weather conditions appeared to threaten the crops.

Other than promoting agriculture, Hsiao-tsung also sought to strengthen the empire's economy through a series of financial reforms, some of which were aimed at achieving a more effective control of the national expenditure by the central government. In 12th/1166, in response to an earlier proposal by the Left Policy Critic Ch'en Liang-yu 陳良祐 that the national expenditure should be properly controlled, the emperor appointed the chief councillor and the assistant councillor to the concurrent positions of Controller and Co-Controller of the National Finance (t'ung-chih kuo-yung shih 同知國用事) respectively.[64] By so doing Hsiao-tsung not only intended that his councillors should play a more effective role in financial administration but it was also his purpose to impose a more centralized control upon the national finance by placing it under the supervision of the chief ministers of state. Another measure to control national expenditure was introduced in 2nd/1167 when the emperor ordered that all government officials, whether civil or military and whether in the Inner or Outer Courts, should submit monthly statements of their official spending to the Bureau of National Expenditure (kuo-yung fang 國用房) on the 5th day of every month. This regulation was not merely restricted to officials in the capital as government personnel in all prefectures were required to submit such monthly

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64. SSCW, ch.24, p.1923; SHY, chih-kuan 6: 20-6: 21, pp.2506-07.

accounts.[65] Such a measure would naturally result in more careful spending by government personnel and reduce cases of misappropriation of official funds. An additional reform to impose strict control over the national finance was introduced in 6th/1168 when a Centralized Register of Public Revenue (tu-chih tu-chi 度支都籍) was established according to the proposal of the Supervisor of Public Revenue Chao Pu-ti 趙不敵. The purpose for setting up such a register was to enable easy checking of its accounts and at the same time prevent abuses of corrupt clerks.[66]

Apart from the great emphasis upon proper control, Hsiao-tsung's financial policy was also characterized by his desire to reduce expenditure. The theme of frugality often emerged in the policy discussion of the time. Also, the policy of retrenchment was frequently resorted to as a measure to reduce expenditure during the early years of the Ch'ien-tao era. Soon after his accession, in an imperial decree issued in 4th/1163, Hsiao-tsung ordered the Ministry of Finance and the censorial officials to discuss ways of cutting down excessive expenditure.[67] This was followed by another decree in 1st/1164, announcing the emperor's decision to reduce expenses in the performance of religious ceremonies.[68] Other than reducing unnecessary or excessive

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65. SSCW, ch.24, p.1926.

66. CHSC, ch.47, pp.3a-3b; SHY, shih-huo 51:46, p.5697.

67. HTC, ch.138, p.3665.

68. Ibid., ch.138, p.3679.

expenses in matters concerning rituals, it was also the policy of Hsiao-tsung and his court to decrease expenses incurred by the military since these constituted the greatest item in the national budget of the dynasty.[69] The large number of soldiers during the Ch'ien-tao era[70] prompted various proposals for reforms to be carried out in the army with the dual purpose of reducing expenditure on the one hand and improving upon the quality of the troops on the other.

For example, in 11th/1166 the General for the Palace Infantry (pu-shuai 步帥) Ch'en Min 陳敏 carried out reform in his army by dismissing the old and weak from the ranks, as a result of which over 2,000 soldiers were retrenched from a total number of 20,000 men.[71] Based upon the estimate that the annual allowances of each soldier were 240 min, Ch'en concluded that by retrenching 2,000 men, he was able to save a total amount of 480,000 min for the court. He therefore proposed extending such a retrenchment scheme to the whole empire, saying that if 10% of the 300,000 soldiers in the various regions were to be retrenched, expenditure would be reduced by 7.2 million min. It was Ch'en's belief that such a reform would not only enrich the empire financially but

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69. The stopping of war did not mean relaxation in the state defence, and 80% of the state income continued to be alloted to the army. See the tomb inscription for Chou Pi-ta in KKC, ch.93, p.887.

70. The number of soldiers during the Ch'ien-tao period is said to be not fewer than 400,000 men. See CYTC, Vol.1, ch.18, pp.4b-5a.

71. SSCW, ch.24, p.1922.

would also strengthen it militarily. Hsiao-tsung agreed with Ch'en's proposal and ordered it to be implemented.[72]

However, a few months later, in 2nd/1167, the Second Privy Councillor Chiang Fei put forward another solution to the problem of military expenditure. While he agreed with Ch'en's policy of retrenchment, he nevertheless pointed out that the implementation of the above reform would give rise to another problem as many of the retrenched were holders of official ranks (yu-kuan jen 有官人) and were therefore entitled to receive pensions after their retirement. As a result, the expenses incurred would effectually remain the same; furthermore, since the vacancies left by those retrenched would soon be filled, the expenses might even be heavier than before. Chiang said that from his observation, there were more than 400 deserters from the army each month, and he calculated that if the vacancies left by these deserters were frozen for a year or more, several million min could have been saved. He also suggested that once the empire was financially strong, it could again start recruiting the strong and healthy for military training. The emperor was extremely impressed by Chiang's proposal and remarked that the latter had indeed found the solution to the financial problem of the time.[73]

Hsiao-tsung's desire to reduce expenditure was also reflected in his frugality, which had often been commended as one of his greatest virtues. The emperor himself claimed that he had

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72. SSCW, ch.24, pp.1922-23.

73. Ibid., ch.24, pp.1926-27.

never spent a single cent extravagantly.[74] He also publicly declared his frugality in the following conversation with one of his ministers. In 5th/1170, the Collator of the Imperial Library (chiao-shu lang 校書郎) Hsiao Kuo-liang 蕭國梁, in referring to the reign of Han Wu-ti 漢武帝 (r. 140-87 B.C.), criticized the latter for his extravagance, as a result of which the wealth and prosperity previously enjoyed by the state eventually gave way to economic decline. To this Hsiao-tsung replied:

> It was not only Wu-ti /who failed in this area/. From times of old the rulers had always observed frugality during times of difficulties, but after the establishment of peace few had not become extravagant. I have no other accomplishment apart from frugality.[75]

Being frugal himself, the emperor therefore did not approve of the extravagant practices of the populace, especially among the more well-to-do peasants. In 9th/1172 he criticized the people for lavish spending during times of good harvests and said that they should be advised to save for times of emergency.[76] From the emperor's comments regarding the extravagant tendencies among the commoners, it can be deduced that there was growing

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74. Hsiao-tsung made this claim in 8th/1168, in response to an official's request that taxes should be gradually reduced to lessen the people's burden. See CHSC, ch.47, p.5a.

75. Ibid., ch.48, p.6a.

76. The emperor commented, "In recent years it appears that most commoners have adopted various extravagant habits. Whenever there happens to be a good harvest, they will spend lavishly on decorating their houses and on buying new and beautiful clothes. Many marriages will take place, with large sums of money being spent on the bridal trousseau...." See SSCW, ch.25, p.2003.

prosperity in the country since the people could now afford a more luxurious living. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the state had become more wealthy under his rule, Hsiao-tsung still insisted on living frugally. He set a good example by practising austerity himself. He was satisfied with the existing buildings in the palace he inherited from Kao-tsung and did not spend any money expanding or renovating the premises. It is said that even the Emperor Emeritus was surprised at the lack of decoration in the palace surroundings when he visited his son in 1st/1171.[77] It was his belief that frugality should start from the palace. In his personal living Hsiao-tsung was also against indulging in fanciful food and in treasures such as jewellery or valuable collections of art.[78] From his life-style it can be seen that the emperor regarded his personal enjoyment as secondary to the interests of his state.

In order to build up a financially strong empire, Hsiao-tsung found that he had to continue with the policy of heavy taxation. During his reign the ching-tsung-chih ch'ien, the supplementary taxes previously introduced by Kao-tsung, continued

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77. CHSC, ch.50, p.1a.

78. In 8th/1175 Hsiao-tsung announced to his ministers that most of the jewellery used in the palace was inherited from former emperors and that less than 50,000 min had been spent on the purchase of jewels since he took over the throne. He further said that in order to eliminate extravagance, one should start from the palace. See ibid., ch.54, pp.21a-21b.

to contribute greatly to the national income.[79] The heavy tax burden borne by the people had led to numerous criticism against oppressive taxation by prefectural authorities, whose chief concern was to meet the tax quota imposed by the central government. For example, in 9th/1169 the Chancellery Imperial Recorder Lin Chi 林機 pointed out that oppressive taxes were imposed by prefectural administrators in order to remit the quota on time. Lin also denounced the sending of "surplus revenue" (hsien-yü 羨餘) by certain prefectural authorities in order to gain favour from the court.[80] Hsiao-tsung agreed with Lin and reprimanded the prefectural officials for failing to appreciate his desire to treat the people with kindness and sympathy. He also declared his intention to gradually abolish the irregular taxes. On the question of surplus revenue the emperor commented that the financial situation of the time did not permit the prefectures to have any surplus revenue. He thus promised to decline such contributions in future.[81] From Hsiao-tsung's response to Lin's criticism, it can be seen that while the emperor regarded revenue

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79. In 6th/1167 the Minister of Finance Ts'ai Kuang 蔡洸 stated that the annual remittance of the ching-tsung-chih ch'ien totalled over 14 million strings of cash. See SHY, shih-huo, 64:103, p.6151. Li Hsin-ch'uan also mentioned that the annual income from the ching-tsung-chih ch'ien gathered from the south-eastern prefectures amounted to 14.4 million min. See CYTC, Vol.1, ch.15, pp.4b-5a. This represented about 20% of the annual cash income (which according to CYTC, Vol. 1, ch.14, p.1a, was in the region of 65 million during the last years of Hsiao-tsung's reign) from the south-eastern region.

80. HTC, ch.141, p.3762.

81. Ibid.

collection as important, he did not forget about the people's welfare. However, the problem of oppressive taxes could not be totally eliminated as long as local authorities were required to deliver their quota.[82]

Although Hsiao-tsung was troubled by the problem of heavy taxation and frequently expressed his desire to abolish all the irregular and supplementary taxes, he found that he could not do away with these taxes because of the extremely heavy military expenses.[83] However, bearing in mind the suffering of the taxpayers, Hsiao-tsung attempted to lessen their burden through various measures, such as tax-remission,[84] declination of "surplus revenue" and prohibition of oppressive taxes. It is interesting to note that while Kao-tsung sought to increase the national income by introducing many new taxes, Hsiao-tsung, on the

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82. The fact that prefectural and local authorities were mainly concerned about meeting tax quota was also pointed out by the Minister of Rites Liu Chang 劉章 in 11th/1170: "Administration in the sub-prefectures and villages is marked by carelessness nowadays. The authorities are merely interested in collecting tax money and as long as the quota is remitted, the prefectural administrators and the circuit intendants would be happy; they are not worried whether justice is being properly carried out in the local governments." See CHSC, ch.49, p.13b. Also, in 1174 the Junior Lord of the Imperial Treasury (t'ai-fu shao-ch'ing 太府少卿) Hsiao Chih-min criticized the system of granting rewards to those who met the quota for the ching-tsung-chih ch'ien and requested that such a system should be abolished. See WCC, ch.33, p.11b.

83. CHSC, ch.47, pp.1b-2a; ch.54, pp.22b-23a.

84. The remission of taxes was frequently practised throughout the reign of Hsiao-tsung, usually as a relief measure to areas which had suffered natural calamities. In 1166 he expressed his admiration for Jen-tung 仁宗, who remitted taxes for one whole year. See Liu K'e-chuang 劉克莊, Hou-ts'un ta ch'üan-chi 後村大全集 (SPTK ed.), ch.87, pp.745-6.

other hand, emphasized the importance of reducing expenditure in order to balance the national income. He also stressed upon proper and systematic control as the means to consolidate the national finance, as the various measures undertaken to control expenditure mentioned earlier would directly contribute towards increasing the income of the empire.

Defence Preparations

Despite the conclusion of the peace settlement, defence preparations constituted a major item in the reconstruction programme of Hsiao-tsung and his court. The emperor regarded the recruitment of military personnel as a matter of primary importance. The issue was first raised in 1st/1165 by the Secretariat Imperial Recorder Wang Ch'i-chung 王藺中, who pointed out that the descendants of military officials appeared to be ashamed to keep up the military tradition of their families. He said that since the country was then free from disturbances, it was a good time to recruit military personnel so that the Sung would not be caught unprepared in case of war. He then proposed selecting from among the families of former generals those capable of a military career, and encouraging them to continue the military tradition by awarding them special honours.[85] Hsiao-tsung agreed with his proposal and said that this should be the urgent task of the day. Thus the peace settlement by no means slackened the efforts of the emperor in the area of defence.

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85. SSCW, ch.24, p.1899.

Hsiao-tsung's efforts in military preparations also involved the building of walls in strategic locations. For instance, wall-repairs were carried out in Chien-k'ang immediately after the war in 1165.[86] Particular attention was paid to the defence of the northern Yang-tzu region with the rebuilding of walls taking place in Yang-chou in 1167, Chen-chou and Ho-chou 和州 (modern Li-yang 歷陽 hsien in An-hui) in 1168 and Lu-chou in 1170.[87] Wall-repair projects were also implemented in Hsiang-yang and Ch'u-chou (Huai-an hsien) in 1169 and 1170 respectively.[88] However, not all officials appeared to share the emperor's enthusiasm for such measures. In 5th/1167, the Signatory Official of the Military Bureau, Wang Yen 王炎, commented that in recent years the scholar-officials appeared to be over-restrained and timid in their discussion of policies, as shown by their disapproval of the emperor sending the Commander of the Palace Guards, Wang Ch'i, to measure the walls in the Huai region (for repair purposes).[89] The officials' opposition was mainly due to their fear that such defence measures might arouse the enemy's suspicion and provoke them into renewing hostilities. Hsiao-tsung nevertheless did not see any harm in carrying out these defence

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86. See SHY, fang-yü 方域 9:13, p.7465.

87. See ibid., fang-yü 9:1-9, pp.7459-63.

88. HTC, ch.141, p.3758 and p.3768.

89. SSCW, ch.24, p.1930.

preparations and complained that the scholar-officials were being inflexible.[90]

Apart from their fear of provoking the enemy, the officials may also have opposed certain defence measures because of financial considerations. Since the bulk of the national expenditure went to defence, the question of how to strike a proper balance between strengthening the empire's defences and not over-taxing the people was often debated by Hsiao-tsung and his ministers. In 12th/1166, the Policy-Critic Ch'en Liang-yu stated the issue clearly:

> Nowadays those who are profit-oriented are interested in creating more wealth, but this will only burden the people, while the government funds become all the more insufficient.... We should try to reduce the number of officials and soldiers, so that 70% of the national expenditure can be alloted to keeping the soldiers and the officials, and 30% for emergency use....[91]

Hsiao-tsung replied that it had always been his desire to abolish the irregular taxes so as to relieve the people's burden. Ch'en Liang-yu commented that such irregular taxes had been introduced because of the heavy expenses incurred during times of war but they were not abolished even after the peace settlement had been concluded. He then assured the emperor that his ambition to remove all irregular taxes could be achieved if the national expenditures could be reduced.[92] On another occasion, in 3rd/1167, when Chief Councillor Yeh Yung 葉顒 requested that the forces

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90. Ibid.

91. CHSC, ch.29, p.10b.

92. Ibid.

in Chiang-chou 江州 (modern Chiu-chiang 九江 hsien in Chiang-hsi) be disbanded, Hsiao-tsung agreed with deep regret that there was no alternative to doing so. He commented, "It is easy to recruit and train soldiers, but most difficult to provide for them.... In future, when there is a surplus in revenue, we can still recruit more soldiers."[93]

Though he was obliged to reduce the number of soldiers in certain areas in order to cut military expenses, Hsiao-tsung did not neglect the defence of strategic locations, as is shown by his wall-building efforts in both the Yang-tzu and Huai regions. In 3rd/1167 he assigned the general Ch'en Min to the defence of Kao-yu 高郵 in Huai-tung.[94] Ch'en had earlier been noted for streamlining the infantry by retrenching the unfit from the ranks. Defence of the north-western frontier was also given a high priority by the government. After the death of Wu Lin in 4th/1167, for example, Hsiao-tsung sent the Administrator of the Military Bureau Yü Yün-wen to take his place as Pacification Commissioner of Ssu-ch'uan. After taking up his new post, Yü Yün-wen contributed much in building up the defences of the Ssu-ch'uan and Shensi regions. He paid a great deal of attention to the recruitment of generals, as is evident from one of his memorials in 1167:

> Since coming to Ssu-ch'uan I have regarded the selection of generals as the most urgent matter. I have tried to make inquiries from

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93. SSCW, ch.24, p.1928.

94. SSCW, ch.24, p.1929.

> all parties and kept records of those who had been recommended by others. I even interview them and examine their military skills....[95]

He also improved the efficiency of the army by dismissing the weak and old.[96] Dissatisfied with the performance of certain generals, he requested that they be replaced with military personnel from the southeast or even with former generals who had been demoted such as Li Hsien-chung and others.[97]

One of Yü Yün-wen's outstanding contributions to the defence of the north-western frontiers was the reorganization of the local defence corps known as i-shih 義士 (righteous men or loyalist soldiers).[98] As a kind of militia, these loyalist soldiers provided a means of defending the country without incurring heavy expenses. Instead of maintaining a regular army, Yü strongly advocated the use of these i-shih, who could be trained during the slack season of the farming year in preparation for any emergency. In a memorial dated 27/12th/1167 Yü reported that at the beginning of the Shao-hsing period, there were 70,000 i-shih who had been recruited into the Southern Sung army, but their numbers had dwindled to a mere 6,000 in 1161. After the

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95. SWCT, ch.57, pp.9a-10a.

96. See Yü Yun-wen's memorial dated 1168 in SWCT, ch.57, pp.13a-13b; see also CCC, ch.120, p.1070.

97. SWCT, ch.57, pp.13a-13b. For Yü's efforts in the selection of generals see also KKC, ch.120, p.1070.

98. For an account of the i-shih, see WHTK, ch.156, p.1364; CYTC, Vol.1, ch.18, pp.6b-9b.

recent recruitment efforts, the number of i-shih who had been reorganized in the various north-western prefectures of Hsing-yüan fu 興元府 (modern Nan-cheng 南鄭 hsien in Shensi), Yang-chou 洋州 (modern Yang-hsien in Shensi) and Ta-an chun 大安軍 (modern Ning-chiang 寧羌 hsien in Shensi) totalled over 23,900 men. Although the numbers from the other prefectures had yet to be reported, Yü estimated that about 30,000 men could be recruited for the purpose of local defence. He concluded by saying:

> In this way, there is no need to go through the trouble of recruiting (regular) soldiers. We can save yearly expenses by six to seven million min while at the same time obtaining the services of forty to fifty thousand men. The advantages are therefore obvious....[99]

Subsequently, in 3rd/1169, Yü reported that over 26,000 i-shih from Hsing-yüan fu, Yang-chou, Ta-an chün and Hsing-chou 興州 (modern Lüeh-yang 略陽 hsien in Shensi) had been reorganized into troops and had received training from the Commandant of the Li-chou East circuit (Li-chou-tung lu tsung-kuan 利州東路總管) Huang-fu Tiao 皇甫倜 with encouraging results. He thus requested for Huang-fu to be stationed at Hsing-yüan for the sole purpose of training the i-shih for emergency use and the emperor willingly complied.[100] The i-shih therefore contributed in no small way to the consolidation of the Southern Sung defence.

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99. SWCT, ch.58, pp.18b-19a; SHY, ping 兵 1:25, p.6766.

100. SHY, ping 1:28, p.6767; WHTK, ch.156, p.1364.

The recruitment and training of militia also took place in other areas besides Ssu-ch'uan. For example, on 4/11th/1168, an imperial edict was issued ordering the prefectural administrators of the Liang-Huai region to recruit loyalist soldiers (i-ping). The recruitment was based on the number of males in each household — one from every three males in each family was to be registered as i-ping and given military training during the slack season from the 10th month to the 1st month. Each soldier would be paid allowances during the period of training.[101] Also in 1st/1168, the recruitment of the militia called the "Righteous Brave" (i-yung 義勇) took place in Ching-nan 荊南 according to the proposal of its ex-administrator Wang Yen, who had earlier reported that over 8,400 men could be recruited into the militia service.[102] The training of militia was diligently carried out in different areas, and rewards would be given to the outstanding men among the trainees as an incentive.[103] In order not to impose too much burden upon the peasants, it was also the court's policy to assemble the militia for training for a period of one month per year, during which their needs would be provided for.[104]

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101. SHY, ping 1:28, p.6767; WHTK, ch.156, p.1364.

102. Wang Yen also greatly emphasized the point that much expenses could be saved by using the i-yung militia. See CHSC, ch.47, p.1a. For an account of the i-yung militia in the Ching-o 荊鄂 region, see CYTC, Vol.1, ch.18, pp.8b-10a and WHTK, ch.156, pp.1365-66.

103. According to the imperial edict of 1/6th/1172, during the training of militia in the Liang-Huai and Yang-tzu regions, outstanding men were to be chosen each year and their names submitted to the Military Bureau for the granting of rewards. See SHY, ping 1:33, p.6770.

104. See imperial edict of 23/12th/1172 in ibid., ping 1:36, p.6771.

Besides the use of local militia, the establishment of military colonies (t'un-t'ien 屯田) was also regarded as a means of strengthening defence while saving cost. According to the t'un-t'ien system, the farms were to be worked upon by the regular soldiers and the militia who stayed in different sections of the colony. They would normally engage themselves in farming but take up arms during times of emergency.[105] This appears to be an ideal way of defending the borders without incurring much cost, since the soldiers were supposed to be self-supporting. However, the projects were not always successful because of poor management and other factors such as depopulation.[106] In 2nd/1165 the emperor assigned various generals, military commanders and circuit intendants to take charge of the management and administration of the military colonies in different parts of the empire.[107] Subsequently the scheme was abandoned in certain areas where the projects were running at a loss, and the land was either leased out to the public or used for the settlement of refugees.[108]

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105. For an account of the t'un-t'ien of Southern Sung, see CYTC, Vol.1, ch.16, pp.1b-3a.

106. For example, in 1163 the Minister of Works Chang Shan pointed out the disadvantages of t'un-t'ien in the Ching-Hsiang region, saying that it was not because the farms could not be worked upon, but there were insufficient men to do the farming. Because of this, peasants were forced to work for official farms while neglecting their own farms. See WHTK, ch.7, p.78.

107. HTC, ch.139, p.3698; SHY, shih-huo 63:52, p.6012.

108. The t'un-t'ien in Hsü-i was abandoned in 2nd/1166 while that in Ho-chou and Lu-chou in 1st/1170 and 7th/1172 respectively. See HTC, ch.139, p.3710; ch.141, p.3769 and ch.143, p.3818.

In their efforts to build up the Southern Sung army, Hsiao-tsung and his court were also faced with the problem of controlling the generals. In 7th/1167 the emperor declared that he wished to appoint an Assistant Commander (fu tu-t'ung 副都統) to each of the military units in the Yang-tzu region. This was not only to keep reserves of army commanders for future use, but it was also intended to prevent the General Commanders (tu-t'ung 都統) from accumulating too much power.[109] Following this announcement Kuo Kang 郭剛 was appointed Assistant Commander of Chen-chiang and Chang Jung 張榮 that of Chien-kang.[110] Thus in an attempt to keep effective control over his military personnel, the emperor resorted to the measure of balancing the power of the chief commanders with that of the lesser generals.

Hsiao-tsung was also very interested in practical warfare, and personally took part in five nation-wide military exercises, three of which were carried out during the Ch'ien-tao period: in 1166 at Pai-shih 白石, 1168 at Mao-t'ang 茅灘 and 1170 at Pai-shih again. On each occasion Hsiao-tsung personally put on armour and directed the exercises. It was a grand spectacle and all the participants were richly rewarded.[111] In addition, Hsiao-tsung

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109. CHSC, ch.46, pp.9a-9b; WHTK, ch.59, p.540.

110. WHTK, ch.59, p.540.

111. For an account of the five military inspections carried out by Hsiao-tsung, see CYTC, Vol.2, ch.4, pp.12a-14b.

practised the military arts of horsemanship and archery.[112] Hsiao-tsung's enthusiasm for the military arts and the tactical aspects of war[113] was not, however, shared by his ministers, who feared that the emperor might injure himself and felt that His Majesty's interest in practical warfare would not contribute much to the dynasty's long-range preparations for reconquest. This was illustrated in the following episode.

In 6th/1169, Hsiao-tsung was recovering from an eye injury received while practising archery and had to hold audience with the ministers in the palace instead of attending the usual court sessions. He was thus admonished by Chief Councillor Ch'en Chün-ch'ing, who said:

> Your Majesty has not been attending court for a month, and this causes much confusion in court.... I have heard that the rulers from times of old, once they attained positions of wealth and power, would indulge in the various pleasures of life ... which prevented them from becoming perfect rulers. Your Majesty, on the contrary, is diligent and frugal, pure and has few desires; you are able to discard the various vices possessed by able rulers of olden days, but you still cannot forget about horsemanship and archery. I know that it is not because you find pleasure in doing these, but it is because of your great ambition to

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112. Hsiao-tsung kept physically fit by carrying a rod made of solid iron around the palace; he also kept a wooden horse in his chambers and practised archery on horse-back during his leisure hours. See Lo Ta-ching 羅大經, Ho-lin yü-lu 鶴林玉露 (pai-hai 稗海 ed.), ch.5, p.12b; P'ang Yung-yin 潘永因, Sung-pai lei-ch'ao 宋稗類鈔 (Taipei: Kuang-wen shu-chü 廣文書局, 1967), ch.1, p.13b.

113. In the Hsüan-te palace hall Hsiao-tsung had various charts of defence strategy or troop movements pinned on the wall so that he could constantly refer to them. See WCC, ch.104, p.11b.

> achieve reconquest that you practise the military arts yourself....[114]

He went on to say that if the emperor was able to appoint the right men in both the civil and military fields, and raise the morale of the soldiers with a fair system of government, his reputation would be enough to frighten off the enemy, and it would not be necessary for him to engage in fighting them himself.[115] Ch'en's arguments indicate that he believed in long-term planning to achieve the goal of hui-fu, and considered this as more important than the practical manouvres of war esteemed by the emperor.

Foreign Relations and Hsiao-tsung's Ambition to achieve hui-fu

It was not only in the military arts and physical sports that the emperor found himself restrained by his ever-cautious ministers, but in the area of foreign policy he was also being constantly reminded not to act rashly. Indeed, in the early years of the Ch'ien-tao period, it had been the policy of the court to maintain a low posture in foreign relations with the Jurchen. For instance, in 11th/1167, during a court debate on reconquest, the Co-Administrator of the Military Bureau Liu Kung said that even though revenge should be the major concern of the court, he believed that the Sung should not make a rash move before they had actually carried out internal reforms for the next ten years. One of his colleagues asked, "Emperors Kao-tsu 高祖 and Kuang-wu 光武 (founders of the Western and Eastern Han respectively)

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114. CWC, ch.96, p.1718; SSCW, ch.25, p.1950.

115. Ibid.

both rose from the status of commoners, but they were able to conquer the empire within a few years. Why, then, should we wait for ten years?" Liu Kung replied, "It was simply because they rose from the status of commoners that Kao-tsu and Kuang-wu could personally involve themselves with dangerous undertakings without any cares, but Your Majesty has been entrusted with the responsibility of an empire of two hundred years. How can we compare Your Highness with the two (Han) emperors?" He then called upon Hsiao-tsung to emulate the example of King Hsüan (Hsüan-wang 宣王) of the Chou (周) dynasty, who was able to achieve restoration after a period of internal reform.[116] Liu Kung's views can be said to represent the general opinion at court, since most of the officials were in favour of a period of internal consolidation before embarking upon any aggressive foreign policy.[117]

Nevertheless, long before the ten-year period advocated by Liu Kung was up, Hsiao-tsung began to show signs of impatience at the court's timid attitude towards the enemy. In 7th/1167, when told by the Policy Critic Adviser Ch'en Liang-yu that the recent repairs of the walls in Yang-chou were not regarded as beneficial

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116. For an account of the above court debate on hui-fu, see CWC, ch.97, pp.1728-29; CHSC, ch.46, pp.15a-15b.

117. Besides Ch'en Chün-ch'ing and Liu Kung, many other officials had advocated putting their own state in order (tzu-chih) before actively considering hui-fu. These include prominent scholar-officials such as Chang Shih and Chu Hsi. For Chang's views on hui-fu see his tomb inscription in CWC, ch.89, pp.1578-79, and for Chu's stand on this matter, see his sealed memorial dated 1/11th/1188 in CWC, ch.11, p.178.

by the officials, the emperor asked, "How can defence preparations not be beneficial?" To this Ch'en replied:

> Supposing the enemy were to attack us and we failed to defend the city /of Yang-chou/, we would have built the walls for them. Now that we have sent twenty to thirty thousand men across the Yang-tzu /for wall-repairs and defence of Yang-chou/, fresh hostilities could break out if the enemy happened to know about it.

Unconvinced, Hsiao-tsung commented, "Such measures should indeed not be carried out in the Huai region, but what is the harm of doing so in the internal area?" Ch'en still advised the emperor to be cautious and concluded by referring to the theme of consolidation, emphasizing that the essential thing in defence was none other than selecting military personnel, saving up funds and resources, cherishing the people and providing for the soldiers.[118]

From the above, it can be seen that the emperor appeared to possess more courage and zeal than his ministers in matters concerning defence and foreign policy, and he occasionally adopted a more militant attitude in foreign relations. This was especially noticeable in the later years of the Ch'ien-tao era, during which period Hsiao-tsung found a great supporter in Yü Yün-wen, who was also in favour of a stronger foreign policy. On becoming Right Chief Councillor in 8th/1169, Yü put forward his idea of sending envoys to Chin to request for the territory of the imperial tombs in Ho-nan. This was strongly opposed by the Left Chief Councillor Ch'en Chün-ch'ing on the grounds that such

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118. SSCW, ch.24, p.1931.

action might put the enemy on the alert and even provoke them into declaring war upon Sung, which was far from ready to fight. He regarded such a move as abandoning the major to obtain the minor, arguing that once the goal of hui-fu had been achieved, the territory of the imperial tombs would naturally be restored to the Sung, while any attempts to obtain it at the moment would lead to more harm than good.[119] Because of Ch'en's opposition Hsiao-tsung decided to postpone sending envoys for the above purpose for the time being, but he finally adopted Yü's proposal in the following year. Ch'en then insisted on resigning and was given a prefectural position as Administrator of Fu-chou 福州 in 5th/1170, but before he left, the faithful councillor again requested the emperor not to dispatch envoys to Chin without careful consideration.[120]

Nevertheless, Hsiao-tsung had already made up his mind. In the summer of 1170, at Yü Yün-wen's recommendation, the Chancellery Imperial Recorder Fan Ch'eng-ta was appointed envoy to Chin. Besides his major mission of requesting the territory of the imperial tombs, Fan had an additional duty of requesting an alteration in the rites for receiving the Chin letter of state by the Sung. Since the peace settlement of 1142, it had been the practice of the Sung emperor to descend from his throne to receive letters of state from the Chin envoy. The same procedure was

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119. For Ch'en's arguments against the sending of envoys to request for the territory of the imperial tombs, see CWC, ch.96, p.1718.

120. CWC, ch.96, p.1719; SSCW, ch.25, p.1965.

followed after the 1165 treaty, and feeling that such rites were degrading, it had been Hsiao-tsung's intention for some time to bring about the change in the ceremony, but he had earlier been discouraged from doing so by Ch'en Chün-ch'ing.[121] Fearing that such a request might indeed be provocative to the enemy, Hsiao-tsung did not include it in the state letter, but briefed Fan Ch'eng-ta about it.[122]

Because of the fears of arousing the enemy's suspicion, a number of officials voiced their opposition to the mission of Fan Ch'eng-ta. The Minister of War, Huang Chung 黃中, commended the emperor for his filial piety in trying to retrieve the tombs of his ancestors, but expressed his regrets that the court had not requested the return of the imperial coffin of Ch'in-tsung.[123] The Minister of Personnel, Ch'en Liang-yu, submitted a more strongly-worded memorial, protesting that such a mission could possibly lead to war, and that Sung was in a poor state to face an enemy invasion. He was also of the opinion that if a mission should be sent, it would be more appropriate to request for the coffin of Ch'in-tsung. Hsiao-tsung was offended by his memorial and ordered that Ch'en be dismissed and exiled.[124] The mission

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121. SSPM, ch.77, p.824.

122. It is said that Fan Ch'eng-ta suggested to Hsiao-tsung to include the second request on the alteration of rites in the state letter requesting for the territory of the imperial tombs, but the emperor did not want to make the second request official. See biography of Fan Ch'eng-ta, SS, ch.386, p.11868.

123. CHSC, ch.48, p.14a.

124. SSPM, ch.77, pp.824-5.

was also opposed by the Chancellery Imperial Recorder Chang Shih; at an imperial audience, he told the emperor that the internal weakness of the Sung did not permit it to adopt an aggressive foreign policy. He further emphasized that a time of internal consolidation was necessary in order to ensure eventual victory for the Sung.[125] It can be seen from the above that the general attitude of the court was one of extreme caution, and any policy which might lead to hostilities with the enemy was immediately frowned upon. Therefore, Hsiao-tsung did not have the support of his court in his attempt to improve the Sung position in foreign relations. The only exception appears to have been Yü Yün-wen, who thus became his trusted minister in the ensuing two to three years.

Fan Ch'eng-ta returned from Chin in 9th/1170. Although the second request on the alteration of rites for receiving the Chin letter of state was not originally included in the Sung state letter, Fan managed to submit a memorial on this issue to the Chin emperor. The Chin refused to grant the two requests,[126] but the initiative shown by Fan in fighting for the Sung cause was deeply

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125. CWC, ch.89, pp.1578-79; SSPM, ch.77, pp.824-5.

126. In their reply, the Chin stated that with regard to the issue of the imperial tombs, they were only willing to bring about a transfer of these tombs; regarding the issue on the receiving of Chin letter of state, an alteration in the rites would mean a lack of distinction between the superior and inferior status of the two states, and would reflect badly on the sincerity of the Sung in observing the peace agreement. See SSPM, ch.77, p.826.

appreciated by Hsiao-tsung.[127] Also, despite the failure of Fan's mission, Hsiao-tsung did not give up trying to influence the Chin to grant the two requests. In 11th/1170 the Drafting Official of the Imperial Secretariat Chao Hsiung 趙雄 was sent on an official mission to greet the Chin emperor on his birthday, but he also carried with him a letter requesting the alteration in the rites for receiving Chin state letter.[128] However, the Sung request was again rejected by the Jurchen.[129] After his return in 3rd/1171, Chao Hsiung greatly pleased Hsiao-tsung by reporting that the people of the Central Plain were daily awaiting the arrival of the Sung army.[130] This appears to have been far from the truth, however, for at that time the Chin state was actually experiencing peace and prosperity.[131] Knowing Hsiao-tsung's ambition to achieve hui-fu, Chao Hsiung seems to have been willing to go to the extent of distorting facts in order to gain the emperor's favour.

Having failed to bring about further improvement in the diplomatic status of the Sung and knowing the difficulties

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127. Tomb inscription for Fan Ch'eng-ta, WCC, ch.61, p.18a; HTC, ch.142, p.3785.

128. HTC, ch.142, p.3789.

129. The Chin emperor sent a messenger to Chao Hsiung, questioning why the Sung did not request for the imperial coffin of Ch'in-tsung, and saying that since such a request had not been made, they would give him a burial in Chin. There was not a word about the rites for receiving the state letter. See ibid.

130. CYTC, Vol.1, ch.8, p.4b.

131. HTC, ch.142, p.3795.

involved in hui-fu, Hsiao-tsung frequently expressed his regrets for the lack of military accomplishment during his own reign. On one occasion in 7th/1171, he told the councillors that he had often regretted the fact that his accomplishment was not as great as that of T'ang T'ai-tsung, and that the country's wealth was not comparable to that during the time of Han Wen-ti 漢文帝 and Ching-ti 景帝. Thereupon Yü Yün-wen consoled him, saying, "If Your Majesty keeps to the virtue of frugality, after a number of years our country's wealth will not be less than that of Han Wen-ti and Ching-ti. In order to be as successful as T'ang T'ai-tsung, it is up to Your Majesty to work hard and daily remind yourself of your duty." To this Hsiao-tsung replied:

> I consider none of the three tasks of founding, preserving and restoring as easy, that is why I work diligently day and night, not daring to relax for a single moment. After the day's work is over, I will reflect on what I have done in case I have accidentally neglected some of my duties. I will think over and over for fear of making mistakes....[132]

Hsiao-tsung's statement not only testifies that he was a diligent and conscientious monarch, but it also reveals the heavy burden and responsibilities he had to bear as the consolidator of the Southern Sung empire.

During the above conversation, Hsiao-tsung also told his ministers that he had pasted on his desk the character "generals" (chiang 將) in order to constantly remind himself of his duty to

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132. For the above conversation between Hsiao-tsung and the councillors, see CHSC, ch.50, pp.15b-16a.

select military personnel. He further said that it was his chief concern that after years of continuous searching, he had still not discovered the right way to recruit generals. He then called upon the ministers to consider this problem. Yü Yün-wen again consoled the emperor, saying that men of ability would only appear during times of emergency, to which Hsiao-tsung fully agreed.[133] From the above, it can be seen that for many years, it had been Hsiao-tsung's ambition to strengthen Sung military power through the recruitment of good generals, but was frustrated with his own failure to find the right personnel.

Hsiao-tsung's ambition to achieve reconquest became more apparent during the last years of the Ch'ien-tao era. Following the mission of Fan Ch'eng-ta many an opportunist fell in line with imperial wishes by memorailising about hui-fu, and more than ten were given official positions for having impressed the emperor with their proposals to achieve reconquest.[134] In 9th/1172 the emperor decided to send Yü Yün-wen (who had resigned from his position of chief councillor) once again to Ssu-ch'uan as its Pacification Commissioner. The grand farewell given to Yü indicates the importance Hsiao-tsung attached to Yü's assignment.[135]

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133. CHSC, ch.50, p.16b.

134. See WCC, ch.61, p.18b.

135. Yü Yün-wen was allowed to leave with great honour; Hsiao-tsung presented him with valuable gifts consisting of sacrificial vessels from the imperial temple and personally wrote him a poem. It is said that the grand treatment given to Yü was unprecedented in the farewell given to any of the chief councillors since the beginning of the Southern Sung. See CYTC, Vol.2, ch.12, pp.5a-5b.

It is said that before Yü left for Ssu-ch'uan, the emperor discussed with him the strategy of advancing the army into the Central Plain; he even ordered Yü to set a time for joint military action (between the Ssu-ch'uan army led by Yü and the imperial army led by the emperor himself) in Ho-nan.[136] From his parting instruction to Yü, it is thus clear that Hsiao-tsung intended to play a direct role in the military campaign against the enemy. It was indeed Hsiao-tsung's cherished dream to lead his army personally to victory, just as T'ang T'ai-tsung had.

During his second term as Pacification Commissioner of Ssu-ch'uan, Yü Yün-wen further consolidated the defence in Ssu-ch'uan by selecting able generals, raising the morale of the soldiers with higher pay, increasing the supply of horses and reorganizing the troops for better co-ordination in the event of war.[137] Hsiao-tsung, however, was unhappy over the fact that after having been sent to Ssu-ch'uan for more than a year, Yü still had not set a date for counter-attack. Getting rather impatient, the emperor is said to have sent confidential messages to Yü, urging him to get on with his mission of reconquest. Thus when Yü replied that the army was not ready yet for an offensive campaign, Hsiao-tsung apparently was much displeased.[138] Consequently, when Yü died the following year, it is said that

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136. See HTC, ch.143, p.3821.

137. See CCC, ch.120, pp.1072-73.

138. CYTC, Vol.2, ch.8, p.2b and p.5a; HTC, ch.144, p.3838.

the emperor refused to grant him any posthumous honours. However, Hsiao-tsung's prejudice against Yü was finally removed when he witnessed the high quality of the troops in a subsequent military exercise, and gave Yü due credit for his painstaking efforts in selecting and training the soldiers.[139]

It is thus seen that in the later part of the Ch'ien-tao era, Hsiao-tsung began to adopt a more aggressive posture in foreign relations. Apart from his optimism regarding hui-fu, he was also more persistent in bargaining for an improvement in the status of Sung. The controversy over the rites for receiving Chin letter of state in 12th/1173 led to a certain amount of tension in early 1174, as we shall see in the following chapter. The fact that Hsiao-tsung felt confident enough to adopt a more aggressive foreign policy by the end of the Ch'ien-tao period could be an indication that in the last decade of reconstruction, Southern Sung had consolidated much of its power and could now face the enemy with renewed strength and greater confidence.

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139. CYTC, Vol.2, ch.8, p.2b; HTC, ch.144, p.3838.

CHAPTER V

COURT POLITICS DURING THE CH'UN-HSI ERA: GROWTH OF ABSOLUTISM 1174-1189

At the beginning of 1174, Hsiao-tsung changed his reign title from Ch'ien-tao[1] to Ch'un-hsi (Unadulterated Splendour).[2] Even though the Ch'ien-tao period had been one of revival and restoration after the 1161-64 war, the emperor apparently was not really satisfied with his own accomplishments during the last decade. He was constantly troubled by the fact that the Sung was comparatively weaker than the Han and T'ang dynasties in the military field, and one of his greatest regrets was his inability to achieve reconquest during the Ch'ien-tao era. By the end of 1173 the emperor had clearly adopted a more aggressive stand in foreign relations, and it appears to be his intention to achieve a more glorious reign in the years to come.

The Ch'un-hsi era, which lasted for sixteen years till Hsiao-tsung's retirement in 1189, is noted for the continued efforts made by the Sung government in order to improve its

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1. The Ch'ien-tao era was deemed to have completed its cycle, since the character ch'ien 乾, which represents Heaven (ch'ien-yuan 乾元), is symbolised by the number "nine" in the art of Chinese divination. So the era was considered to have reached its ultimate after a period of nine years. See CYTC, Vol.1, ch.3, p.1a.

2. The reign title Ch'un-hsi was named after the two reign titles of T'ai-tsung: Ch'un-hua 淳化(990-994) and Yung-hsi 雍熙(984-987). See CYTC, Vol.1, ch.3, pp.1b-2a.

status vis-a-vis the Chin. Domestically, the state was able to enjoy political stability and economic prosperity. The years of reconstruction had indeed borne fruit in that the populace could now afford to live more comfortably, even indulging in some luxury. Moreover, as a result of Hsiao-tsung's frugality, the imperial treasuries were filled to the brim. Politically, the emperor remained as the apex of power, exercising his authority in a decisive and assertive manner, allowing no one to overshadow his position as decision-maker. Prompted by his success in domestic politics and feeling ever more confident of himself, Hsiao-tsung, who had already revealed certain autocratic tendencies during his early years on the throne, portrayed such characteristics even more distinctly as he grew older. His authoritarian approach could be seen through his control over the bureaucracy and his relations with the ministers and other personnel. As his grip over the bureaucracy tightened, the officials became even more submissive to the emperor's authority. It is noted that most of the chief councillors who served during this period were men whose political views seldom differed from that of Hsiao-tsung himself and who were more complaisant about imperial conduct and court policy. Consequently, court politics was less marked by the stormy scenes which prevailed during the previous era. The Ch'un-hsi period is therefore characterized by the growth of absolutism; nevertheless, it should be recognised that such absolutism was not necessarily a bad thing as it appears to have brought a period of peace and order to the domestic scene.

Foreign Relations since 1174

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, during the last years of the Ch'ien-tao era Hsiao-tsung became more persistent in bargaining for an improvement in the diplomatic status of the Sung. It was towards the end of 1173 and the beginning of 1174 when the Southern Sung adopted the most aggressive posture in its relations with the Chin. This was revealed by the treatment given to the Chin envoy Wan-yen Chang 完顏璋 in 12th/1173. Wan-yen Chang, who was sent on a New Year Greetings mission to Sung, was initially prevented from seeing the emperor because of disagreement over the protocol for receiving the Chin letter of state. It is clear that Hsiao-tsung, who had all the while been unhappy about having to descend from his throne in order to receive the Chin state letter, again attempted to bring about an alteration in the rites stipulated by the peace treaty of 1165. The envoy was eventually given an imperial audience after the intervention of the Emperor Emeritus (Kao-tsung), who persuaded Hsiao-tsung to observe the former rites for the time being.[3] However, after his return to Chin in 2nd/1174, Wan-yen Chang was severely punished for having brought dishonour to the Chin government during his last mission.[4] Although the Sung records are quite silent about the incident, it can be deduced from the

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3. HTC, ch.143, p.3836.

4. Wan-yen Chang was accused of allowing the Chin state letter to be taken away in an improper manner and of succumbing to the bribery of the Sung. See CS, ch.61, piao 表 3, p.1453; HTC, ch.143, p.3838.

indignation of the Chin that proper rites had not been observed during Wan-yen Chang's embassy. The fact that Hsiao-tsung did not appear to be worried about the possible consequences of such action does indicate his confidence to confront the Chin at this time.

As we may recall, it was with great expectation that Hsiao-tsung appointed Yü Yün-wen Pacification Commissioner of Ssu-ch'uan in 1172 and assigned him the important mission of reconquest. The vision of hui-fu appears to have been most realistic to the emperor at this particular moment for in his conversation with Yü, he seems to have actually entertained hopes of an imminent reconquest.[5] However, such hopes soon turned to frustration when Yü Yün-wen, having been sent to Ssu-ch'uan for over a year, did not make any move towards the launching of a military campaign. The emperor's loss of patience was also reflected by his refusal to follow the former protocol in receiving the Chin envoy. Nevertheless, despite his disappointment in Yü, Hsiao-tsung must have had sufficient confidence in the military strength of the Sung that he had the courage to defy the Chin in early 1174.

Following the punishment of Wan-yen Chang, there arose rumours among Chin officials regarding the renewal of hostilities between the two states.[6] This did not take place however, as neither the Chin nor the Sung was keen to go into war once again.

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5. See Chapter IV, pp. 187-188.

6. HTC, ch.143, p.3838.

Nevertheless, in 3rd/1174, the Chin emperor decided to send the Minister of Punishment Liang Su 梁肅 as Commissioner of Inquiry to Sung (Sung-kuo hsiang-wen shih 宋國詳問使) to query the latter for failing to adhere to the stipulated rites during the previous embassy. When Liang arrived at the Sung court, Hsiao-tsung, seeing that the Jurchen were really offended, decided to comply with their wishes by standing up from his throne to receive the Chin letter of state.[7] By so doing Hsiao-tsung thus avoided the prospect of war. Another factor which might have influenced the emperor to withdraw from his aggressive posture was the death of Yü Yün-wen in 2nd/1174.[8] The loss of his strongest supporter in foreign policy at this crucial moment must have been rather disheartening to Hsiao-tsung that he decided to give in to the Chin. Nevertheless, this did not mean that the emperor was willing to drop the issue, for he made several more attempts to have the humiliating rites altered. In 4th/1174, it was decided to send the Minister of Works Chang Tzu-yen 張子顏 to Chin in response to the Chin inquiry, and at the same time to formally request for an alteration in the ceremony for the receiving of Chin state letter. However, the request was once again turned down by the Chin emperor, who insisted that the Sung should

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7. Biography of Liang Su, CS, ch.86, pp.1983-84.

8. Yü Yün-wen died of illness less than two years after taking up his appointment as Pacification Commissioner of Ssu-ch'uan. His untiring devotion to his duties is said to have caused his death. See CCC, ch.120, p.1073.

continue to observe former protocol.[9]

Apart from the issue above, the problem of the Sung imperial tombs being in the hands of the enemy continued to disturb Hsiao-tsung. Despite the failure of the Fan Ch'eng-ta mission to request the territory of the imperial tombs in 1170, Hsiao-tsung refused to give up hope entirely. In 8th/1175 he decided to send the Left Policy Critic T'ang Pang-yen on a similar mission to Chin. T'ang, the man chosen for this difficult task, was a protégé of Yü Yün-wen. Since his appointment as a censorial official in mid-1175, T'ang had been noted for his boldness in criticizing various matters and his performance had greatly impressed the emperor.[10] Unfortunately, T'ang turned out to be a great disappointment to Hsiao-tsung for it is said that while he was at the Chin court, the envoy so trusted by the emperor failed to utter a single word for the Sung cause.[11] Thus when T'ang returned in 4th/1176, the angry emperor ordered that he be exiled

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9. A debate was held in the Chin court regarding the Sung request for an alteration in ceremony. While some officials contended that the Sung had already been granted enough concession in the peace treaty, others were afraid that refusal might lead to hostilities. The Chin emperor, fearing that compliance might encourage further demands from the Sung, decided that its request should not be granted. See HTC, ch.144, p.3842.

10. See Anonymous, Ching-k'ou ch'i-chiu chuan 京口耆舊傳 in shou-shang-ko ts'ung-shu 守山閣叢書 (Taipei: I-wen yin-shu kuan 藝文印書館, 1968), ch.8, p.5a.

11. After his arrival at the Chin capital, T'ang Pang-yen was not permitted to see the Chin emperor immediately. He was finally summoned after more than ten days, but on his way to court, he saw the path lined up with soldiers carrying arms. Consequently, T'ang was so frightened that he did not dare to utter a single word. See CHSC, ch.54, p.16a.

for failing to preserve the honour of the Sung state.[12] From then on Hsiao-tsung decided to drop the issue of the imperial tombs and no more envoys were sent on such missions.

Nevertheless, the emperor did not give up his attempts to improve the diplomatic status of the Sung. In 12th/1181 the Chin envoy on a New Year Greetings mission was involved in another controversy over the rites for receiving the Chin state letter. Hsiao-tsung once again insisted that he should remain seated on his throne when the letter was handed over to him. He sent the General Transmitter of Directives in the Military Bureau, Wang Pien, a trusted Inner Court attendant, to speak to the Chin envoy in an attempt to influence the latter to agree to an alteration in the ceremony concerned. Wang, however, failed in his task to persuade the Chin envoy into accepting the Sung request, and instead, gave in to the Chin demand by consenting that the former rites be followed.[13] The emperor was naturally displeased and had Wang dismissed the following month. This was the last occasion when the issue of the state letter was raised.

Since the many attempts made by Hsiao-tsung to upgrade the international status of the Sung did not lead to any concrete results, it is understandable why the emperor should feel rather frustrated in the area of foreign relations and frequently expressed his regrets for the military weakness of the Sung.

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12. T'ang was accused of having received bribes from the Chin. See CHSC, ch.54, p.16a.

13. CHSC, ch.56, p.9a; HTC, ch.148, p.3954; biography of Wang Pien, SS, ch.470, p.13674.

For example, in 10th/1176, when he was praised by his ministers for practising frugality in the palace, Hsiao-tsung replied, "The domestic laws in our dynasty are far superior to those of Han and T'ang; the only thing we lag behind is military achievement."[14] On another occasion in 6th/1184, in a conversation with Chief Councillor Wang Huai 王淮, Hsiao-tsung again commented that the military power of the Sung was far below that of Han and T'ang and attributed Sung victories in certain battles to Heaven's help. Wang agreed, saying that the benevolence of the Sung rulers would lead to victories, not through force, but through reason. The emperor then consoled himself by referring to the failure of Han Wu-ti:

> During the reign of Han Wu-ti the military power of the empire caused awe and trembling thousands of miles away, but what had it accomplished? Instead, the losses incurred were much too great![15]

From Hsiao-tsung's comments in the two conversations above, it is clear that even though on the one hand the emperor was unhappy about the lack of military accomplishment, on the other hand, he was undoubtedly proud of his achievement in domestic affairs.

Also, despite Hsiao-tsung's personal dissatisfaction, it should nevertheless be recognized that during his reign the Sung state was in a much stronger position than before. It was during this period that the Sung had the best bargaining power vis-a-vis the Chin in foreign relations, and this could be attributed

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14. CHSC, ch.54, p.23b.

15. CHSC, ch.61, p.7a; HTC, ch.149, p.3988.

largely to the consolidation of military power and the constant defence preparations undertaken by Hsiao-tsung and his court. During the Ch'un-hsi era two more large-scale military exercises were held - once in 1177 at Mao-t'ang and the other in 1185 at Lung-shan 龍山 (south of modern Hang-hsien 杭縣 in Che-chiang)[16] Military training of archers was frequently held in the palace and archery contests also took place in conjunction with palace feasts.[17] Furthermore, in order to encourage scholar-officials to cultivate an interest in the military arts, the Imperial University students and successful Chin-shih candidates were also required to take part in archery contests and were rewarded according to their skills.[18]

In spite of the various efforts made during the Ch'ien-tao era to reduce military expenditure, the very fact that the army continued to account for over 80% of the national expenditure[19] shows clearly that the absence of war did not mean the lack of military preparedness. The number of soldiers in the imperial army remained in the region of 400,000 and their maintenance

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16. See CYTC, Vol.2, ch.4, p.4b.

17. CHSC, ch.53, p.2b and p.13a.

18. CHSC, ch.59, p.19b; WHTK, ch.32, p.301.

19. In 1st/1183 Hsiao-tsung commented that it was expensive to keep the army since about 80% of the national expenditure went to the military. The Administrator of the Military Bureau Chou Pi-ta replied that it was even more than 80%. See CHSC, ch.60, p.1b; KKC, ch.93, p.887.

alone came to 80 million min annually.[20] Besides, the training of militia, the buying and tending of horses and the management of military colonies (t'un-t'ien) further increased the expenses of the government. Military training of both the regular soldiers and the militia was strongly emphasized by Hsiao-tsung. For instance, in 8th/1177 imperial orders were issued for the prefectural administrators to take charge of the training of militia (min-ping 民兵) for one month during the slack season.[21] Furthermore, the prefectural administrators were also responsible for the training of the imperial army (chin-chün 禁軍) stationed in their respective territories.[22] Special attention was also given to the tending of horses used for war.[23] For example, in 5th/1176 the emperor personally cautioned the officials in charge of tending horses (mu-ma kuan 牧馬官) to take good care of the horses.[24] While the training of militia and the

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20. See CYTC, Vol.1, ch.18, pp.4b-5a. This was based upon the calculation that each soldier's annual allowances came to about 200 min.

21. CHSC, ch.55, p.16b.

22. In the imperial edict of 8th/1177 the prefectural administrators in the different circuits were required to carry out strict supervision upon the military officials so that the latter would be diligent in training the soldiers. The court would also send officials to make unexpected inspections upon these troops and any fall in standards would result in the impeachment of the administrators concerned. See CHSC, ch.55, pp.16b-17a.

23. For a brief account of the horse-administration of the Southern Sung, see Chin Pao-hsiang 金寶祥, "Nan-Sung ma-cheng k'ao" 南宋馬政考, in Sung-Liao-Chin-Yuan Shih lun-chi 宋遼金元史論集 (SLCYS) (Hong Kong: Ch'ung-wen shu-tien 崇文書局, 1971), pp.321-330.

24. CHSC, ch.54, p.18b.

acquisition of horses led to heavy expenses and hardship among the populace,[25] these efforts are nevertheless indicative of an active defence policy. The pursuance of a strong policy in defence is also shown by the renewed interest in t'un-t'ien in the later years of the Ch'un-hsi era. In 5th/1183 the t'un-t'ien project in Hsiang-yang was reorganized according to the proposal of the Assistant Commander of O-chou, Kuo Kao 郭果.[26] This was followed by the reorganization of the military colonies in Ho-chou and Chien-k'ang in 6th/1183.[27]

Because of the vigilance of Hsiao-tsung in matters concerning defence, it is said that the Jurchen were in fact afraid that the Sung might one day launch a counter-attack against them.[28] The various diplomatic attempts of Hsiao-tsung to upgrade the Sung position in foreign relations were after all

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25. For example, in his memorial in 3rd/1182, the Registrar of the Imperial University Yang Chia 楊甲 criticized that the militia system caused much hardship and suffering among the people of Liang-Huai, and the urgency to acquire horses caused the Sung to pay high prices for these. See ibid., ch.59, p.19b,

26. SHY, shih-huo 63: 52-53, pp.6012-13. Kuo memorialised about the advantages of the t'un-t'ien system and said that after experiencing peace for many years, it was time to organize the military colonies in a proper manner.

27. SHY, shih-huo 63: 53, p.6013; HTC, ch.148, p.3968.

28. It is said that the Chin emperor, Shih-tsung (r. 1161-1189), had frequently reminded his ministers to accumulate resources and take care of border defence, saying that he was afraid the peace settlement with the Sung might not last. This shows that the Jurchen did not regard Hsiao-tsung lightly. See annals of Hsiao-tsung, SS, ch.35, p.692.

not really in vain since these probably had the effect of putting the Jurchen on their guard and restraining them from violating the terms of the peace treaty. All in all, it can be said that although Hsiao-tsung did not achieve his life-long ambition of reconquest or hui-fu, the fact that he was able to maintain peace and keep the Chin from threatening Sung for the major part of his reign was indeed no minor achievement, as pointed out by Kao-tsung in the following episode. On 18/3rd/1180 Hsiao-tsung invited his parents over to his palace for a family get-together. While admiring the beauty in the rock-garden, Hsiao-tsung modestly referred to his own lack of virtue, saying that he did not deserve to enjoy the fruit of Kao-tsung's labour. To this the Emperor Emeritus responded:

> My son, your filiality has moved Heaven and you have kept the empire in peace for almost twenty years. How can you say that you have no accomplishment![29]

To a pacifist like Kao-tsung, who used to live in great fear of his powerful neighbour, continuous peace was indeed most desirable, and Hsiao-tsung's ability to maintain the status quo for over two decades was thus truly appreciated by his father.

The Absolute Monarch

(i) Imperial Power Versus Ministerial Power

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Hsiao-tsung did not allow his chief ministers to stay long in office for fear that they might develop a strong following and endanger imperial

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29. See WCC, ch.181, p.6a.

power. Such autocratic behaviour was clearly demonstrated during the early years of the Ch'un-hsi era, when the emperor ruled without the assistance of a chief councillor and administered the bureaucracy largely by himself. This took place following the dismissal of Chief Councillor Yeh Heng 葉衡 in 9th/1175, as his position was left vacant while the Second Privy Councillor Kung Mao-liang 龔茂良, being the most senior member of the bureaucracy then, was assigned the duties of chief councillor.[30] Even after Kung's dismissal in 6th/1177, the chief-councillorship remained vacant until Shih Hao was reappointed to that position in 3rd/1178. Thus for almost three years, in the absence of a chief councillor, Hsiao-tsung functioned as both political leader and chief administrator of his empire. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that the emperor's authority was greatly enhanced. Although Kung Mao-liang was officially assigned the duties of a chief councillor, in practice Hsiao-tsung himself took over much of the executive power. This is revealed by the remarks of the Compiling Official (pien-hsiu kuan 編修官) Lü Tsu-ch'ien 呂祖謙, who memorialised in 3rd/1177:

> Your Majesty feels that the councillors are not equal to the duties of their office and thus takes over their functions, while the councillors personally take charge of the minor details of the administration and assumes the functions of

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30. Hsü Tsu-ming, Sung tsai-fu pien-nien lu, ch.18, p.7a. The fact that Kung Mao-liang had acted as chief councillor in his capacity as Second Privy Councillor for a relatively long period (from 9th/1175 to 6th/1177) has been noted as an exceptional case in Chinese institutional history. See WHTK, ch.49, p.451.

the various departments....[31]

From the above statement it is clear that the emperor's encroachment on the councillors' authority did not escape the attention of the officials. However, despite their constant admonition, Hsiao-tsung's style of government shows that he demanded everything to be placed under his personal command.

The growth of absolutism during this period was also illustrated by the dismissal of Kung Mao-liang and its aftermath. Being an efficient administrator who was zealous in performing his duties, Kung was not afraid to offend other officials and Inner Court personnel who might have been the emperor's favourites.[32] This could be one of the reasons why the emperor was reluctant to promote him to the position of chief councillor. Kung's refusal to ingratiate himself with the Inner Court personnel also led to his quarrel with Tseng Ti, who was the direct cause of Kung's dismissal in 1177. Since his return to court in 1170, Tseng was able to enjoy boundless imperial favour and became

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31. Lü Tsu-ch'ien 呂祖謙, Lü Tung-lai hsien-sheng wen-chi 呂東萊先生文集 (TSCC ed.), p.15.

32. For example, in 9th/1176 Kung ordered an investigation into the accounts of the three General Superintendent Offices (tsung-ssu 總司) in Huai-tung because of discrepancy in the annual expenditure figures. Subsequently it was confirmed that there had been misappropriation of army funds in Huai-tung. By insisting on carrying out the investigation, Kung made himself an enemy of the Comptroller (tsung-ling 總領) of Huai-tung, Ch'ien Liang-ch'en 錢良臣, and certain palace attendants who had previously received bribes from Ch'ien. Ch'ien is said to have played a part in Kung's downfall later. See CHSC, ch.54, pp.22a-22b.

increasingly powerful.[33] Confident that the emperor was on his side, in 4th/1177 Tseng intended to go against civil service regulations on appointment by requesting that his descendants be permitted to hold civil (instead of military) ranks. He was however circumvented by Kung who insisted that all civil and military officials were only allowed to have their descendants sponsored into the service to which they originally belonged.[34] Soon after this an angry Tseng sought revenge by instigating officers under him to show disrespect to Kung by deliberately blocking the way while the latter was leaving court.[35] When ordered by the street patrol to move aside, the officers defiantly replied, "How much longer can the Second Privy Councillor remain in his position!" Thereupon Kung reported the incident to the emperor, saying that such an insult did not matter to him personally, but he was afraid the honour of the entire court was at stake. Hsiao-tsung then

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33. Tseng returned to court with a capital sinecure in 10th/1170. In the following year he was promoted to be ch'eng-hsüan shih 承宣使 for having accompanied the heir-apparent in his studies formerly. In 1172 he was sent on a mission to Chin and on his return was awarded the title of Military Governor. Further honour was heaped upon him in 1174 when he was promoted to the highly prestigious rank of k'ai-fu i-t'ung san-ssu 開府儀同三司. See biography of Tseng Ti, SS, ch.470, p.13690.

34. See biography of Kung Mao-liang, SS, ch.144, p.11845; HTC, ch.145, p.3882.

35. These officers include Chia Kuang-tsu 賈光祖, Li Ch'u-ho 李處和, and T'ang Chang 唐章 who were acting as the mounted couriers of Tseng Ti on this occasion. Tseng was leaving the palace after seeing the emperor and Kung was coming from behind. The officers refused to give way to the councillor. While most sources claim that Tseng ordered the officers to act in this manner, Chou Pi-ta points out that it was common for the couriers to create trouble by behaving in a disorderly manner. See WCC, ch.181, pp.2b-3a.

attempted to reconcile the two by asking Tseng to apologise to Kung. Tseng did so, but was rebuffed by Kung with these words, "A Second Privy Councillor is a councillor of the court." Seeing that Kung was still indignant, the emperor warned him against acting rashly. However, Kung took the matter into his own hands by issuing an order for the officers involved to be flogged and dismissed. Hsiao-tsung was displeased that Kung went against his order and blamed the latter for being too hasty in meting out punishment to the officers concerned.[36]

Kung Mao-liang was soon to suffer the consequence of his action. Hsiao-tsung apparently did not want to create an impression that he was taking sides in the above quarrel and he resorted to using the censorial organ against Kung. In 5th/1177 Hsieh Kuo-jan 謝廓然, a friend of Tseng Ti, was appointed Palace Censor by a direct order from the palace. The Drafting Official of the Secretariat, Lin Kuang-ch'ao 林光朝, who refused to endorse the appointment, was transferred to another position and eventually given a sinecure.[37] As soon as he stepped foot into the Censorate, Hsieh carried out an impeachment on Kung, accusing him of feigning an imperial order to pass sentence upon the officers under Tseng Ti.[38] Kung was obliged to resign on plea of illness; another

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36. See WCC, ch.181, pp.2b-3a; HTC, ch.145, p.3883; CHSC, ch.55, pp.15a-15b.

37. See the tomb inscription for Lin Kuang-ch'ao in WCC, ch.63, p.2a; HTC, ch.145, p.3883.

38. HTC, ch.145, p.3884.

factor which prompted his resignation was his association with Lin Kuang-ch'ao, who came from the same village as himself.[39] In 6th/1177 Kung was dismissed from the position of Second Privy Councillor and appointed Administrator of Chien-k'ang fu. However, Hsieh refused to leave him alone and Kung was removed from his new post after having been accused of usurping authority and cultivating factions at court. In 7th/1177, as a result of further impeachment by Hsieh,[40] Kung was exiled to Ying-chou 英州, where he died the following year.

Such severe punishment of a high-ranking minister was indeed rare during Hsiao-tsung's reign. Kung Mao-liang's downfall has generally been attributed to the doings of Tseng Ti,[41] but it should be remembered that had Kung not displeased the emperor, he would not have suffered such a tragic fate. Kung's quarrel with Tseng Ti would not have annoyed Hsiao-tsung so much if the councillor had not acted on his own authority. What really offended the emperor was that his advice had not been heeded by Kung, and to an absolutist like Hsiao-tsung, such an offence was truly unforgivable.

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39. WCC, ch.181, p.3b; HTC, ch.145, p.3884.

40. Hsieh Kuo-jan accused Kung of four major crimes which were punishable by death, namely, inconsistency in his policy on defence; claiming the virtuous acts of the emperor as due to his influence; making his own words those of the emperor and claiming imperial orders to be his words; and appointing his associates to important positions at court. See CHSC, ch.55, pp.15b-16a; HTC, ch.145, p.3886.

41. See for example HTC, ch.145, p.3886; CHSC, ch.55, pp.15b-16a.

The emperor's strong reaction to the above incident is seen in the issuing of an imperial edict immediately after Kung's dismissal in 6th/1177, which made it imperative for the Three Departments and the Bureau of Military Affairs to resubmit after court the "imperial orders" (chih 旨) which they had received for final confirmation by the emperor before they were permitted to implement these.[42] This was a direct response to the feigning of an imperial order by Kung Mao-liang. It was to make doubly sure that all the imperial orders were genuine and that no future councillors would be able to act on their own authority by claiming that they were acting according to imperial orders. By insisting on imperial verification on all matters, Hsiao-tsung saw to it that there would not be any loopholes for bureaucratic manipulation in future.

Following the above episode, another event which portrayed the conflict between emperor and minister took place in the winter of 1178, when Hsiao-tsung had a serious quarrel with Chief Councillor Shih Hao. After an absence of more than thirteen years, Shih was summoned to court and appointed Reader-in-waiting in 3rd/1177; a year later he was again appointed to the position of Right Chief Councillor. As before, the upright and unyielding

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42. Formerly, after presenting their memorials at court, the Three Departments and the Bureau of Military Affairs were permitted to endorse these straight away as "imperial orders" to be implemented. After Kung Mao-liang's dismissal, a relative of Tseng Ti called Han Yen-ku 韓彥古 proposed that instead of the above procedure, the officials should be made to resubmit their memorials after court so that the emperor could examine them closely in his palace before endorsing them. This proposal was gladly accepted by Hsiao-tsung. See WCC, ch.181, p.4a.

character of Shih Hao made it difficult for him to serve under Hsiao-tsung, who was equally strong-willed and uncompromising. Despite the great respect the emperor had for his former tutor, he was inclined to reject the latter's advice when it did not suit him, and this made any long-term cooperation between them virtually impossible.

The quarrel between Hsiao-tsung and Shih Hao was caused by the chief councillor's dissatisfaction with the emperor's stand in the handling of a court case involving a fight between civilians and palace guardsmen. In 10th/1178 a request was made by the General Transmitter of Directives in the Military Bureau, Wang Pien, to recruit 6,000 men to fill the vacancies in the various military units of the capital. Following this a commander of the palace guards carried out the recruitment by force. This led to much commotion in the capital and many potential conscripts mutilated themselves to avoid being drafted into the army. Those who resisted were intimidated, and the unruly soldiers even seized the property of some civilians. Riots broke out and many arrests were made. In the trial that followed, it was decided to impose the death sentence on one of the soldiers and a civilian accused of inciting the riot while the others were released.[43] Feeling strongly that the sentence was unjust, Shih Hao protested by sending a memorial to the throne. While agreeing that the soldier deserved capital punishment, he nevertheless opposed imposing the same sentence on the civilian, arguing that the

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43. For an account of this incident, see biography of Shih Hao, SS, ch.396, pp.12067-68; KKC, ch.93, p.880.

latter merely acted out of self-defence. When Hsiao-tsung disagreed, Shih criticized His Majesty for permitting such grave injustice because he was reluctant to offend the military. He also warned the emperor that oppression of the masses would lead to serious consequences.[44] Such severe criticism infuriated Hsiao-tsung, but Shih Hao held firmly to his views. Finally, in 11th/1178 Shih handed in his resignation. Despite their disagreement, the emperor treated him with due respect by appointing him Junior Tutor and keeping him as Reader-in-waiting.

The above affair not only discloses the behaviour of an absolute monarch but it also reveals the emperor's indulgence towards the military. In contrast to Kao-tsung, Hsiao-tsung seems to have adopted a more favourable attitude towards the military. For example, in the appointment of prefectural administrators, Hsiao-tsung was of the opinion that as long as the candidates were capable, they could be given such appointments, regardless of whether they were civil or military officials.[45] He was also noted for his benevolent treatment of the generals.[46] His partiality for the army personnel could be due to the fact that

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44. Shih Hao alluded to the story of two peasants who rebelled against the Ch'in dynasty because they were unable to report on time for conscript labour service, an offence punishable by death under Ch'in law. For the allusion see Shih Chi 史記 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1972 reprint), ch.48, pp.1949-50.

45. This was stated in an imperial decree (yü-pi) issued in 11th/1176, see CHSC, ch.54, p.26b.

46. See CYTC, Vol.2, ch.2, p.10a.

he regarded them as more or less belonging to him personally. Hsiao-tsung kept the armies under his direct command by appointing the generals himself in consultation with his close attendants. He also sent confidential orders to the army and employed the palace attendants as his messengers. The direct control of military personnel was an imperial prerogative which Hsiao-tsung guarded jealously even against his own ministers.[47]

(ii) Imperial Favourites versus Ideological Authority

Besides his favourtism for the military, Hsiao-tsung's indulgent attitude towards the Inner Court personnel also led to frequent criticism by his ministers. By relying on his palace favourites and using them as a balance against bureaucratic power, the emperor was obviously augmenting the trend towards absolutism. Such inclination was even more noticeable during the Ch'un-hsi era when the "close attendants" of the emperor became increasingly powerful with the support of the emperor and the reduced opposition from high-ranking ministers at court. Among the most notorious palace attendants were Tseng Ti, Wang Pien and Kan Pien甘昇. Hsiao-tsung's favouritism to Tseng Ti has already been described in the previous incident when Tseng quarreled with Kung Mao-liang. Besides Tseng, another palace official who managed to gain the favour of the throne was Wang Pien. He started his career as a minor clerk in the Bureau of State Letters (kuo-hsin suo國信所) at the beginning of Hsiao-tsung's reign, but was able to capture

47. See the tomb inscription for Chou Pi-ta in KKC, ch.93, p.887.

the emperor's attention after his successful mission to the Chin camp to negotiate for peace.[48] While serving as Administrator of the Palace Postern during the Ch'ien-tao era, the emperor sent him on an important mission to inspect the armies in the Ching-Hsiang region. During the Ch'un-hsi period he was given a concurrent appointment as General Transmitter of Directives in the Military Bureau and it was his proposal to recruit more soldiers in the capital that led to the riot of 10th/1178.[49] The third imperial favourite was the eunuch Kan Pien, whose powerful influence was already noted in the capital during the Ch'ien-tao period.[50] During the late 1170s and early 1180s the trio is said to have collaborated with one another in misusing their power while their friendship was sought by some scholar-officials who were without moral integrity.[51]

Such unhealthy development naturally led to the protests of the Outer Court officials. Among them was the Staff Author Hu Tsin-ch'en 胡晉臣, who in 1178 brought to the emperor's attention the misuse of authority by his close attendants. Hsiao-tsung then ordered Second Privy Councillor Chao Hsiung to carry

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48. Biography of Wang Pien, SS, ch.470, p.13696; HTC, ch.139, p.3694.

49. SS, ch.470, p.13694.

50. See biography of Kan Pien, SS, ch.469, pp.13672-73; Wang Ming-ch'ing, Yü-chao hsin-chih 玉照新志 (TSCC ed.), ch.4, p.58.

51. CHSC, ch.56, p.8b; biography of Kan Pien, SS, ch.469, p.13673 and biography of Tseng Ti, SS, ch.470, p.13691.

out an investigation. Fearing to offend Wang Pien and his gang, Chao is said to have ordered Hu to leave them alone and to submit the names of a few other less influential palace officials instead to the emperor.[52] Hu was later dismissed from court for having spoken against the Inner Court personnel. Apart from Hu, the Collator of the Imperial Library Cheng Chien 鄭鑑 and the Registrar of the Court of Imperial Family Affairs Yüan Shu 袁樞 had also spoken to Hsiao-tsung regarding the above issue but they were unheeded by the emperor.[53] One of the most open attacks on Wang Pien came from the Vice-Minister of Rites Chao Ju-yü 趙汝愚, who expressed his concern that the authority over the control of military personnel had been given solely to Wang.[54] Also, in 9th/1178, while on his way to take up his new appointment as Governor of Chien-k'ang, Ch'en Chün-ch'ing, who had been noted for his vigorous opposition to the Inner Court Personnel during the Ch'ien-tao era, was granted an imperial audience during which he again protested vehemently against the usurpation of power by the palace favourites.

Ch'en Chün-ch'ing first spoke about the selection of generals, pointing out that many of the generals obtained their

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52. Biography of Wang Pien, SS, ch.470, p.13694.

53. SS, ch.470, p.13694; CHSC, ch.56, p.8b.

54. SS, ch.470, p.13694. Chao Ju-yü also commented that at the beginning of Hsiao-tsung's reign, the chief councillors were vigilant against the usurpation of power by the emperor's close attendants, but in recent years the chief ministers were no longer in the habit of fighting the Inner Court attendants, and he said this was the reason for the latter's rise in power.

positions by bribing and befriending the close attendants of the emperor. Hsiao-tsung denied this, saying that all military personnel above the rank of comptroller (tsung-ling kuan) were personally appointed by him. Ch'en nevertheless insisted that the emperor should pay attention to this problem so that discipline could be maintained within the armies.[55] He then criticized Hsiao-tsung for allowing his close attendants to interfere with the appointment of personnel:

> In the selection and appointment of personnel it is only right that Your Majesty should distinguish between the good and evil officials, and that the appointment should be done through the court in accordance with public opinion. However, I have heard that Tseng Ti and Wang Pien are guilty of abusing power and receiving bribes. When they make recommendations for the appointment or promotion of officials, these are implemented by direct orders from the palace....[56]

The emperor again denied such charges, explaining that he might have complied with the wishes of his close associates in cases of minor appointments, but he would never allow them to interfere with the appointment of important officials. On the following day, before leaving for his new post, Ch'en told Hsiao-tsung that after having been away from court for the past nine years, he was impressed by the peace and prosperity in the capital, but he also

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55. Ch'en Chün-ch'ing pointed out that since the generals obtained their positions not through their own ability but through bribery, they would definitely not be able to command the respect of their subordinates and this would adversely affect army discipline. See CWC, ch.96, p.1721.

56. Ibid.

noticed a great change in the public morals of the scholar-officials. He then commented that formerly there were only a handful of scholar-officials who ingratiated themselves with Tseng Ti and Wang Pien but the number of officials who openly curried favour with Tseng and Wang had largely increased. Finally Ch'en warned the emperor that his confidence in these palace favourites would lead to disastrous effects upon the empire.[57] Although Hsiao-tsung is said to have appreciated his advice, it is clear that he did not take Ch'en's words seriously, since no action was taken against his close attendants.

The emperor's fondness for the Inner Court functionaries also drew criticism from others. One of the severest came from the renowned scholar-official Chu Hsi. Chu had declined to serve in the government until the spring of 1179 when he accepted a provincial assignment as Administrator of Nan-k'ang 南康 (in modern Chiang-hsi).[58] In 4th/1180 Chu responded to an imperial proclamation by submitting a sealed memorial in which he criticized Hsiao-tsung for putting his trust in his close associates. He alleged that the emperor did not assign the councillors, censors and other officials their due responsibilities but instead His Highness only discussed matters with one or two of his close associates. According to Chu these few

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57. CWC, ch.96, p.1722.

58. CYTC, Vol.2, ch.8, pp.7b-8a. For an account of the political life of Chu Hsi, see C.M. Shirokauer, "Chu Hsi's Political Career: A Study in Ambivalence" in Confucian Personalities, ed. by A.W. Wright and D.C. Twitchett (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), pp.162-188.

vicious men were guilty of misleading the emperor, manipulating appointments, robbing the emperor of his wealth and usurping imperial authority. He even claimed that the emperor was in the hands of these unscrupulous sycophants:

> As these people establish their power and influence, the whole nation bows before them. As a result Your Majesty's decrees and orders, promotions and demotions are no longer issued from the court but from the private residence of these one or two persons. The so-called personal decisions of Your Majesty are in fact the doing of this handful of men who secretly exercise your power of control....[59]

Hsiao-tsung was enraged by this memorial but was persuaded by Chief Councillor Chao Hsiung to ignore it and Chu was allowed to remain in his post.[60]

Another reference to the emperor's reliance upon his close associates was made by the Registrar of the Imperial University Yang Chia 楊甲. In a ten-thousand word memorial presented to the throne in 3rd/1182 Yang commented:

> In recent years the powerful favourites /of Your Majesty/ have much authority and their homes are crowded with visitors /who seek to befriend them/. As soon as the imperial orders are issued, there would be numerous slanders accusing Your Majesty of making your close associates your confidants instead of trusing your chief ministers.[61]

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59. CWC, ch.11, pp.167-168.

60. Chao is said to have advised the emperor that any action against fame-seekers such as Chu Hsi would only serve to enhance the latter's prestige. See SSPM, ch.78, p.831; HTC, ch.147, p.3933.

61. For Yang Chia's memorial, see CHSC, ch.59, pp.15a-15b.

He further stated that half of the civil and military officials were personal friends of these powerful favourites, whose clique occupied all the important positions in government, while the good and righteous officials despaired and suffered in silence.[62]

From the denunciation of the Inner Court favourites, it is clear that the officials were indignant that the emperor should trust his close attendants instead of placing his confidence in the ministers of the regular bureaucracy. Having obtained their positions through the civil service examination system, the scholar-officials regarded themselves as the true representatives of Confucian ideological authority and therefore demanded that the monarch should listen to their advice rather than that of the palace functionaries. In their opinion these palace attendants did not possess such authority since they were not appointed through the regular civil service system. They were thus extremely concerned that the emperor should allow his authority to be usurped by these favourites and sycophants. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that this was not really the case for although Hsiao-tsung might be indulgent towards his favourites, he never allowed them to get out of control.[63] On the contrary,

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62. Ibid.

63. This can be seen from the career of the few imperial favourites concerned. For example, Wang Pien was immediately demoted in 1182 when he failed to carry out the emperor's wish in the diplomatic controversy mentioned earlier. Kan Pien was eventually convicted of corruption, his property was confiscated and he died in disgrace. Even Tseng Ti did not remain forever in the emperor's favour for it is said that Hsiao-tsung did admit that Tseng was responsible for misleading him in various matters. See their respective biography in SS, ch.469 and ch.470, pp.13673-92.

he was the one to make use of these palace personnel to achieve his own purpose. Being his personal attendants and loyal servants, the Inner Court functionaries would carry out imperial wishes without question whereas the ministers would oppose him if they disagreed with his policies or decisions. Since the advice of the scholar-officials was frequently unpalatable, it is understandable why an autocrat like Hsiao-tsung should prefer consulting his attendants to seeking the opinions of his ministers.

(iii) Control Over the Bureaucracy

Indeed, a strong objection frequently voiced by the officials was the emperor's lack of trust in his ministers and his refusal to assign them proper responsibilities. In another memorial addressed to the throne in 11th/1181, Chu Hsi stated that at the beginning of his reign, Hsiao-tsung did make an effort to appoint capable officials to serve in the government. However, after failing to get the right men to serve and being apprehensive of the usurpation of power by influential ministers, the emperor gave up looking for the good and virtuous and became contented with appointing the more flexible and easily controlled men to take up their positions. He pointed out that the emperor's action was responsible for the declining authority of the chief councillor.[64] Chu's reference to the decline in the chief councillor's power clearly reflects the expansion of imperial power during the Ch'un-hsi era. With the exception of Shih Hao,

64. See CWC, ch.13, p.191.

the chief councillors appointed during this period were generally men of a more passive and conformist character and were less noted for opposing the emperor over matters of policy.[65] This could be one reason why the chief councillors during this period were able to serve for comparatively longer terms than their counterparts during the Ch'ien-tao era.[66]

Hsiao-tsung's autocratic approach towards his ministers also led to the admonition of the Division Chief in the Ministry of Personnel (shang-shu li-pu yüan-wai-lang 尚書吏部員外郎) Yang Wan-li 楊萬里. In response to an imperial proclamation for memorials after the occurrence of an earthquake, Yang presented a memorial dated 24/5th/1185. In this memorial Yang discussed various matters regarding foreign policy, defence, personnel appointment etc. which he referred to as the "leaves and branches" of the problem. He concluded by pointing out that the root of the problem lay with the absolute policy of the emperor:

> It is said that a ruler should refrain from performing all the responsibilities himself ... for by assuming authority in all matters, the ruler is in fact depriving the ministers of their duties....[67]

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65. A good example of this category of ministers is Chao Hsiung. For his official biography see SS, ch.396, pp.12073-75.

66. The chief councillor who served for the longest term during the entire Hsiao-tsung reign was Wang Huai, whose tenure of office lasted for almost seven years from 1181 to 1188. For an account of his career, see his hsing-chuang in KKC, ch.87, pp.800-810; SS, ch.391, pp.12069-72.

67. For Yang Wan-li's memorial, see CCC, ch.62, pp.500-504.

It is said that Yang was prompted into making such remarks because the emperor, having been on his throne for many years, made decisions on all matters while the councillors merely carried out his orders; such a development caused widespread concern among the ministers.[68] It has also been pointed out by Chu Hsi in 1188 that because of the emperor's policy of appointing the timid and submissive to be councillors and his refusal to entrust them with important responsibilities, the so-called chief ministers had actually been reduced to the status of mere functionaries who were expected to obey imperial orders without question.[69] While such authoritarian behaviour was regarded as an obvious violation of Confucian standards and looked upon with disapproval by the ministers, Hsiao-tsung certainly thought otherwise. From his point of view, this meant everything in good order, with the emperor controlling the bureaucracy as he should.

Political order in the central government was also achieved because of the emperor's ability to eliminate factions from court. Hsiao-tsung rightly took pride in the fact that factionalism was never a problem during his reign. In a conversation with Chief Councillor Shih Hao in 5th/1178, Hsiao-tsung commented that not only should the chief councillors abstain from forming factions, but the ruler should also refrain from charging his ministers with factionalism for such an accusation would in effect force them into joining factions. He further stated that

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68. HTC, ch.150, p.4003.

69. See Chu Hsi's memorial dated 1/11th/1188, CWC, ch.11, p.173.

it was his policy to appoint the good officials and dismiss the bad ones, regardless of whether they had been recommended by ministers who were later disgraced. Finally Hsiao-tsung attributed the prevalence of factionalism in previous dynasties to the lack of discernment on the part of the rulers.[70] The emperor's personnel policy and astute administration thus freed the court from a major problem which plagued the dynasty during the reign of Kao-tsung. The absence of factionalism is also reflected in the lack of censorial participation in power struggles at court. Unlike their counterparts during the other periods of the Southern Sung, the censors dutifully performed their duties as the "ears and eyes" of the emperor and did not engage in any political infighting at court. The comparatively quiet role of the censors during Hsiao-tsung's reign may also be due to the non-appointment of the chief official to the Censorate for many years. It is interesting to note that for a period of fourteen years from 1169 to 1183, Southern Sung was without an Executive Censor.[71] An obvious implication of this unusual phenomenon is that the emperor did not desire the Censorate to become too influential and thus took the preventive measure by not giving it a head for such a long interval. Such a tactic is similar to his approach in controlling the chief councillors. Furthermore, the emperor chose to appoint the quiet and upright officials to

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70. For the above discussion on factions, see MFML, ch.10, pp.5a-9a.

71. CHSC, ch.60, p.1b.

take over the censorial positions.[72] This policy undoubtedly contributed further to the tranquility at court.

Apart from imposing order upon the central bureaucracy, Hsiao-tsung was also noted for his efforts in extending imperial control into the provinces and prefectures. The emperor's great concern for proper administration in the prefectures is shown by his careful selection of circuit intendants and prefectural administrators.[73] He made it a point to interview all new appointees before they took up their positions in the prefectures. He also set up a screen in his palace, and on this screen was listed the names of all the circuit intendants and prefectural administrators of the entire realm.[74] This was to enable him to keep a constant check upon the many officials assigned to different territories of the empire. Hsiao-tsung also sought to maintain provincial and prefectural administrations under the close supervision of the central government. The administrators at the circuit (or provincial) level, namely the provincial

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72. See the tomb inscription for Hsieh O 謝諤, WCC, ch.68, p.15b.

73. For instance, in a direct decree (yü-pi) in 5th/1182, Hsiao-tsung ordered Chief Councillor Wang Huai and his colleagues to select with care officials to take up positions of circuit intendants and prefectural administrators, emphasizing that selection should be based upon qualifications and conduct. See CHSC, ch.59, p.15b. Also in 2nd/1185 the emperor told Wang Huai that the whole empire depended entirely upon the services of good circuit intendants, and again ordered the ministers to pay special attention to their appointment and the appointment of prefectural administrators. See CHSC, ch.62, pp.3a-3b.

74. WCC, ch.104, p.10b; Chu Hsi, Chu-tzu yü-lei 朱子語類 (Taipei: Cheng-chung shu-chü 正中書局, 1962), ch.127, p.4962.

governors (shuai-ch'en 帥臣) and circuit intendants were required to assess the performance of the prefectural administrators under their control and submit reports to the central government.[75] The system of merit-evaluation of prefectural administrators was strictly enforced during the mid Ch'un-hsi era. In the intercalary third month of 1181 an imperial decree was again issued ordering the circuit intendants and provincial governors to submit annual evaluation reports on the prefectural administrators under their supervision.[76] These circuit authorities were required to make careful investigation before submitting their reports and those who failed to give just reports on their subordinates would be impeached by the censors.[77] Subsequently, in 4th/1183 several prefectural officials were promoted or dismissed according to the reports made by their administrative superiors. Also in 6th/1185 two circuit intendants were demoted for delay in submitting their evaluation reports.[78] Even though the merit-evaluation system was not completely without

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75. Hsiao-tsung issued such an order in 11th/1162 but it was not implemented later because of war. See CYTC, Vol.1, ch.5, p.11b.

76. Under the merit-evaluation system, the prefectural administrators would be assessed according to their performance in administration and classified into three grades — good, bad and average. See CHSC, ch.59, p.4b.

77. CYTC, Vol.1, ch.5, p.11b; CHSC, ch.59, pp.4b-5a.

78. See CYTC, Vol.1, ch.5, pp.11b-12a.

abuses,[79] its successful implementation during the Ch'un-hsi era nevertheless resulted in an efficient system of provincial administration which enabled the central government to exercise unprecedented control over the territories of the empire.

The Pragmatic Emperor

(i) Ideology

Apart from being an absolutist, Hsiao-tsung also exhibits the qualities of a pragmatic ruler in his ideas concerning government and administration and his approach to various problems faced by the state. His advocation of pragmatism is frequently revealed through his dissatisfaction with the impracticality of the Confucian scholar-officials. Even though like most Chinese monarchs, Hsiao-tsung acknowledged Confucianism to be the state ideology, he had on many occasions demonstrated that he was not traditionally Confucianist in inclination.

The following incident not only portrays the autocratic tendency of Hsiao-tsung but also discloses his theory on government, which was far from Confucian. In 12th/1179 the Monitor of the Imperial University (t'ai-hsüeh cheng 太學正) Liu Kuang-tsu 劉光祖 was recommended for a post in the Imperial Library and was required to sit for an examination before taking up his

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79. While the system of merit-evaluation resulted in more efficient administration, it was not really perfect as some circuit authorities could still be bribed into giving favourable reports to their subordinates. It was finally abolished in 1199 during the reign of Ning-tsung. See CYTC, Vol.1, ch.6, pp.4a-4b.

new position. In his essay submitted for the examination Liu expounded his views on government and criticized the emperor for his personnel policy.[80] After reading Liu's paper Hsiao-tsung responded by adding these remarks:

> The problem with the appointment of personnel lies in the fact that the ruler fails to appoint the right man to be chief councillor.... Similarly the chief councillor fails to appoint the right man to be officials. Whenever an official is appointed it is mentioned in his favour that he has obtained top grades in the examinations and is a good scholar, but the ability and conduct of the candidate are never taken into consideration.... Since the beginning of our /Sung/ dynasty, the emperors have been much too benevolent and generous, and chief councillors who mismanage the state and generals who suffer defeat in battles are never executed .... The essential thing is for the ruler to appoint chief councillors with care and the latter will certainly be able to appoint the right men to the right positions. With the granting of rewards on the one hand and the imposition of severe punishment on the other, I don't believe that men of talents will not emerge....[81]

From the above it is clear that the emperor did not have high regard for the benevolent government advocated by Confucian scholars and put into practice by the Sung monarchs. On the other hand, he was advocating the application of Legalist principles of reward and punishment in government.

Such an open denunciation of Confucian values by the emperor naturally led to an uproar at court. However, in order

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80. For the examination answer of Liu Kuang-tsu, see SWCT, ch.68, pp.6a-15a.

81. For Hsiao-tsung's comments, see MFML, ch.10, pp.9a-10a.

to safeguard the image of the throne, the officials accused Tseng Ti of being responsible for drafting the imperial comments.[82] The controversy was finally resolved with the intervention of Shih Hao, who was then serving as imperial lecturer. Shih remarked that severe punishment was never the practice under the rule of sage emperors since ancient times, and that the execution of chief ministers was only implemented under the severe laws of the Ch'in and Han dynasties. He praised the Sung emperors for their benevolent policies and their proper treatment of the ministers. He also took Hsiao-tsung to task for criticizing the Sung monarchs for being too kind and generous:

> How can benevolence be at fault.... I am afraid that Your Majesty may be accused of putting blame on the ancestors /the early Sung emperors/ because of your own desire to implement harsh policies. This is something Your Majesty should consider very carefully....[83]

Finally Shih advised the emperor that he should alter certain phrases if he insisted on making his comments public. Chief Councillor Chao Hsiung also admonished the emperor, saying that it was unlikely for a chief councillor like Ssu-ma Kuang 司馬光 (a renowned statesman of the Northern Sung) to be tempted by rewards and threatened by severe punishment.[84] Hsiao-tsung finally relented and agreed to alter certain wordings of his comments.

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82. CYTC, Vol.2, ch.3, p.9a; HTC, ch.147, p.3982.

83. MFML, ch.10, pp.11b-12a.

84. CYTC, Vol.2, ch.3, p.9b; HTC, ch.147, p.3928.

The emperor's interest in Legalist teaching is also demonstrated by his admiration for Han Hsüan-ti 漢宣帝 (r. 73-49 B.C.), who was noted for his prejudice against Confucian scholars and his preference for using Legalist idea[illegible] governing his empire.[85] In an imperial decree dated 3/7th/1174 Hsiao-tsung exhorted officials throughout the land to play an effective role in recommending upright personnel into the civil service so that public morals could be upheld. He then referred to the administration of Hsüan-ti:

> During the reign of Emperor Hsüan of the Han dynasty he carried out the administration with great efficiency; he ordered the officials throughout the empire to recommend righteous men into government, and as a result the administrative personnel thus appointed were able to fulfil their responsibility and the people could live in peace. This is something which I really admire....[86]

By emulating the example of Han Hsüan-ti, Hsiao-tsung more or less declared that he was open to Legalist principles or for that matter, any other doctrines as long as he found these useful in achieving a more effective government. His advocacy of strict laws was put into practice in 1183 when an imperial decree dated 28/6th of that year ordered that corrupt clerks were to be severely punished by exile and confiscation of property.[87]

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85. See Hung Mai 洪邁, Jung-chai san-pi 容齋三筆, in Jung-chai sui-pi 容齋隨筆 (Ta-li ch'u-pan-she 大立出版社, 1981), ch.2, p.431.

86. SHY, chih-kuan 79:1, p.4210.

87. SHY, chih-kuan 79: 4-5, pp.4211-12.

However, it should be pointed out that despite his support for strict laws and regulations, the emperor did not actually impose severe punishment upon the offenders, but instead he appears to mingle severe laws with lenience. For instance, in 1st/1185, in meting out punishment to a sub-prefectural administrator Tseng Ch'i 曾棨 for misappropriation of official funds, Hsiao-tsung substituted for the death sentence permanent removal from office. He also said that while the circuit intendants deserved to be punished for failing to report Tseng, he did not wish to punish them too severely for this might cause other intendants to pick on any minor faults of their subordinates in order to save their own skin. Thus the two circuit intendants concerned were merely demoted one rank each.[88] The practicality of the emperor is shown by his taking into consideration all aspects and possible implication of his action before carrying it out.

The fact that Hsiao-tsung was not strictly Confucianist is further revealed in another piece of his writings. In 1181, in an article entitled "A Debate on the Original Way" (yüan-tao pien 原道辨), Hsiao-tsung criticized the use of the term yüan-tao by the great T'ang Confucian Han Yü 韓愈, saying that originally the three schools of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism were not very different from one another in their doctrines and that differences were created by ignorant men of later days. He concluded by advocating the convergence of the three teachings:

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88. CHSC, ch.62, p.2b.

> If Buddhism could be used for the cultivation of the mind (hsiu-hsin 修心), Taoism for the nourishment of the soul (yang-sheng 養生) and Confucianism for the government of the world (chih-shih 治世), what is the harm?[89]

Having composed this the emperor showed it to Shih Hao, who objected strongly to His Majesty's criticism of Han Yü and his proposal to incorporate Buddhist and Taoist teachings into the main stream of Confucianism.[90] Finally, Hsiao-tsung took Shih's advice and agreed to alter the title of his essay from yüan-tao pien to "A Discussion on the Three Teachings" (san-chiao lun 三教論).[91] The alteration was obviously made to avoid the notion that the essay was directed against Han Yü, who was held in high esteem by the scholar-officials of the time. By counselling Hsiao-tsung on this matter, Shih clearly intended to protect the image of the emperor, so that his non-traditional approach to Confucianism would not invite criticism from the court.

The incident above again proves the pragmatism of Hsiao-tsung in that he did not refrain from advocating doctrines or ideas frowned upon by the traditional Confucianists so long as he believed these were for the good of his country. However, the

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89. For the text of this composition see MFML, ch.10, pp.1a-2b; the incident is also recorded in CYTC, Vol.2, ch.3, pp.8a-8b.

90. Shih Hao argued that all the three aspects mentioned by the emperor, namely, cultivation of the mind, nourishment of the soul, and government of the world, could be sufficiently met by Confucianism alone and that it was not necessary to make use of the teachings of Buddhism and Taoism. See MFML, ch.10, pp.2b-4b.

91. CYTC, Vol.2, ch.3, p.8b.

emperor's tolerant attitude towards other schools of thought led to the objection of the scholar-officials. For example, in a sealed memorial presented to the throne on 1/11th/1188, Chu Hsi criticised the emperor for his strong interests in Taoism and Buddhism and his preference for the utilitarian philosophy of Kuan Chung 管仲 and Shang Yang 商鞅 (famous Legalists of the Chou and Ch'in dynasties) to the teachings of Confucianism. He protested that although Hsiao-tsung had referred to the teaching of Confucian sages as "common talk and inflexible theories" (ch'an-t'an ssu-fa 常談舊法) and regarded it as not worth learning, it was in fact far superior to the teachings of Taoism, Buddhism and Legalism.[92]

From Chu Hsi's comments, it is clear that Hsiao-tsung did not have much respect for the Confucian scholars. Indeed, he did not make any attempt to conceal his impatience and frustration with the impractical Confucian scholar-officials and their unrealistic theories. He frequently referred to their ignorance and indifferent attitude towards important matters of state. In 5th/1177, during a conversation with Councillors Wang Huai and Chao Hsiung, the emperor commented:

> In recent times most scholar-officials are ashamed to speak about matters concerning agriculture. Agriculture is in fact the basis of the state. The scholar-officials are fond of lofty talk but are impractical ....[93]

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92. CWC, ch.11, pp.178-179.

93. CHSC, ch.55, pp.9a-9b; CYTC, Vol.2, ch.3, pp.7a-7b.

Wang Huai agreed and stated that the great Confucian philosopher Mencius had frequently emphasized the importance of agriculture. Hsiao-tsung then remarked that the scholar-officials appeared to be ignorant of the fact that the ancient sages, including Confucius himself, all regarded finance as the state's chief responsibility. The councillors responded by criticizing scholar-officials for rejecting the sayings of ancient sages and following the teachings of ignorant men of later days. But they also pointed out that the emperor's efforts in administration and finance had nevertheless brought about a change in the manner and attitude of the scholar-officials. Hsiao-tsung replied that there was a slight change, but that was not enough. He then went on to criticize the scholar-officials for their indifference towards reconquest:

> The scholar-officials avoid mentioning the issue of hui-fu. If their family happens to own one hundred mou of farmland, of which fifty mou has been forcibly seized by others, I wonder whether they will file a petition in order to claim it back. How is it that the scholar-officials are quick to attend to affairs of the family but are afraid to speak about matters concerning the state?[94]

Finally, the emperor asked his councillors to pass on his words to the scholar-officials. Pragmatic as he was, he had no patience for their "lofty talk" and their unrealistic approach to the major issues confronting the empire. What he needed were men of action who would help him to manage the finance and administration

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94. CHSC, ch.55, p.9b; CYTC, Vol.2, ch.3, pp.7b-8a.

of the state and contribute concretely towards long-range planning for achieving reconquest.

(ii) Finance and Control over the Treasuries

Hsiao-tsung's practicality could be observed through his prudent financial policy and his management of the state's economy. The emperor exercised great prudence in his monetary policy, as seen by his strict control over the circulation of paper money. During the Southern Sung, paper currencies known by different names of hui-tzu 會子, Ch'uan-yin 川引, Huai-chiao 淮交 and Hu-hui 湖會 were circulated in different parts of the empire.[95] The main paper money was the hui-tzu, of which the circulation was almost nation-wide. It was first introduced during the reign of Kao-tsung in 1160, and its convenience was widely recognised. However in a few years' time, its value began to drop because of over-issue. In 1167, in an attempt to remedy the situation, Hsiao-tsung released 2 million taels of silver from the Imperial Treasury to be sold in the markets for hui-tzu notes which were then destroyed.[96] The strict control on its issue and its great popularity, especially among the business

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95. Generally, hui-tzu was used in Liang-che, Fu-chien, Chiang-tung and Chiang-hsi, Ch'uan-yin in Ssu-ch'uan and Southern Shensi, Huai-chiao in Huai-nan, and Hu-hui in Hu-kuang 湖廣. See Ch'üan Han-sheng 全漢昇, "Sung-mo ti t'ung-huo p'eng-chang chi ch'i tui-yü wu-chia ti ying-hsiang 宋末的通貨膨脹及其對於物價的影響," SSYCC, Vol.2 (1964), p.283; Lien-sheng Yang, Money And Credit In China, pp.56-57.

96. See Hung Mai, op.cit., ch.14, pp.584-585.

community, led to a shortage in the Liang-Huai region in 1175 and more notes had to be issued to meet the demand.[97] Nevertheless, the emperor was extremely careful in his management of hui-tzu.[98] In 1st/1183, on seeing the amount of hui-tzu which had been newly issued, Hsiao-tsung expressed his concern that the increase might lead to its drop in value.[99] Also, in 7th/1185 the emperor once again commented that hui-tzu should not be issued in large amounts, and that its circulation should be withdrawn once military expenses were reduced.[100] By strictly guarding against the over-issue of paper money, Hsiao-tsung was thus able to keep inflation in check and this greatly contributed to the stabilization of the Southern Sung economy.

It has been noted earlier that a keyword in Hsiao-tsung's financial policy was frugality. Indeed, one of the emperor's greatest consolation was that through his frugality, he was able to accumulate plentiful resources in his treasuries. However, it should be pointed out that not all the treasuries in the empire were rich. It was the emperor's policy to channel the important sources of revenue into certain treasuries which served as his

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97. In 3rd/1175, 500,000 kuan 貫 (string) of hui-tzu was assigned for circulation in the Liang-Huai region in exchange for copper coins. See CHSC, ch.54, pp.1b-2a.

98. In 1185 Hsiao-tsung told Hung Mai that because of hui-tzu, he had suffered from insomnia for nearly ten years. See Hung Mai, op.cit., ch.14, p.585.

99. CHSC, ch.60, p.1b.

100. CHSC, ch.62, p.8a.

private purse while the National Treasury often suffered a deficit.[101] Nevertheless, it can be said that such a policy was motivated not by Hsiao-tsung's selfish interest but by his pragmatism. Seeing the reluctance of the scholar-officials in achieving hui-fu, the emperor most probably realized that in attaining the above goal, he had to rely on himself rather than on his ministers and that it was important to build up his personal resources so that he would be able to launch a military campaign when the right moment arrived. It is interesting to note that the above policy was first implemented during the chief-councillorship of Yü Yün-wen.[102] Yü, as we know, shared the emperor's vision of reconquest and thus did not oppose his policy of building up a monetary reserve in preparation for any emergency in future. While it is clear that Hsiao-tsung's intention in enriching his private purse was closely linked to his ambition to achieve hui-fu, his management and control of the empire's treasuries also reflects the growth of absolutism during the Ch'un-hsi era, as illustrated by the following account.

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101. This has been pointed out Chu Hsi, who in his criticism of Hsiao-tsung's financial policy, alleged that a great difference existed between the sources of revenue reserved for the Imperial Treasury and those designated for the National Treasury. While the former obtained its revenue from the essential and well-recorded items, the latter was left with income from items which were more difficult to collect or which might only exist on paper. See Chu-tzu yü-lei, ch.111, p.6b; see also Ch'u's sealed memorial of 12th/1188, CWC, ch.11, p.175.

102. CWC, ch.11, p.175.

Traditionally there were two major types of treasuries in imperial China: the National Treasury (tso-tsang k'u 左藏庫) which was under the control of the Ministry of Finance and the Imperial Treasury (nei-tsang k'u 內藏庫) which was situated in the Inner Court and was a private treasury of the emperor. The latter became increasingly important during the Sung for it not only represented the privy purse of the emperor or performed the function of a palace treasury, but it also played a significant role in the national finance, in a new political system where the emperor was the apex of power.[103] It served as an organ for the consolidation of imperial power for the empire's wealth was stored in it and its contents were kept as confidential as possible. By the time of the Southern Sung, the Imperial Treasury acquired greater significance as half of the national revenue was channeled into it.[104] While the National Treasury was responsible for most of the state's expenditure such as the payment of salaries to the civil and military personnel, the

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103. For a study on the treasuries of the Sung dynasty, see. Umehara Kaoru 梅原郁, "Sōdai no naizō to sazō" 宋代の內藏と左藏, Tōhō gakuhō 東方學報, Vol.42 (Kyoto, 1971), pp.127-175.

104. According to Li Hsin-ch'uan, during the final years of the Shao-hsing era (1127-62) the annual income from the south-eastern region amounted to over 60 million min and half of this was alloted to the Imperial Treasury. See CYYL, ch.193, p.3240. Also, in 4th/1162 the Vice-Minister of Rites Huang Chung 黃中 commented that with half of the national revenue being channeled into the Imperial Treasury, it was impossible for the Ministry of Finance to keep check on its income and expenditure, and he requested for the national income to be fully alloted to the National Treasury instead. See CYYL, ch.199, p.3355.

funds from the Imperial Treasury were only withdrawn occasionally for military expenses and for emergencies such as national calamities.

Besides the nei-tsang and the tso-tsang, a third type of treasury also developed during the Sung out of the need to spend large amounts of money on military expenses and the running of an enlarged bureaucracy. In order to meet these heavy expenses, funds were sometimes withdrawn from the Imperial Treasury as a temporary measure to relieve the government of its financial difficulties. However, as such borrowings became more frequent, it was necessary to separate out the funds which were being constantly withdrawn and set up a new treasury for them. Thus the original two-level system of the empire's treasuries had evolved into a three-level system.[105] The rise of this third kind of treasury was especially noted during the reign of Hsiao-tsung, who was responsible for the establishment of the tso-tsang nan-k'u 左藏南庫 (Southern Storehouse of the National Treasury) and the tso-tsang feng-chuang k'u 左藏封樁庫 (Storehouse for Reserves of the National Treasury). Even though in name they were referred to as parts of the tso-tsang, they were in fact very different from the National Treasury which was directly controlled by the Ministry of Finance. On the contrary, being under the control of the emperor, they were largely similar to the Imperial Treasury in both their nature and functions, and

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105. See Umehara Kaoru, op.cit., p.142.

during the Southern Sung, the term "Imperial Treasury" appears to include both the nan-k'u and the feng-chuang k'u most of the time.[106] However, despite the similarity in functions, they were different from the Imperial Treasury as they were located in the Outer Court and not in the palace.

The nan-k'u was a special treasury set up for the payment of military expenses. It was formed in 1162 by transferring one of the imperial treasuries, namely, the "Imperial Treasury of Awards" (yü-ch'ien chuang-kuan chi-shang k'u 御前樁管激賞庫) to the tso-tsang. The chi-shang k'u was established in 1134 for the payment of awards to military personnel. Since the stopping of war Ch'in Kuei had channelled the important sources of revenue into it and it had become extremely rich during the last years of Kao-tsung's reign.[107] When Hsiao-tsung first took over the throne, he received a memorial from the Left Policy Monitor Yüan Fu 袁孚 who pointed out that formerly most of the national income was alloted to the Ministry of Finance, but in recent years, it was shared among the imperial and national treasuries and this resulted in a deficit in the Ministry. Yüan requested that a fixed quota of the national income be allocated to the imperial treasuries and the rest of the empire's revenue be returned to the Ministry of Finance, so that its accounts would no longer be in the red.[108] Hsiao-tsung responded to Yüan's request by making

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106. Uemhara Kaoru, op.cit., p.141.

107. See CYTC, Vol.1, ch.17, p.3b.

108. For Yüan Fu's memorial see SHY, shih-huo 51:29, p.5689.

the above transfer and renaming the chi-shang k'u the nan-k'u. However, even though it was supposed to be attached to the National Treasury in theory, it was still very much an imperial treasury in practice. It continued in its former function of meeting military expenses and derived its revenue from the court (ch'ao-t'ing 朝廷) rather than from the Ministry of Finance.[109] During the Ch'ien-tao era the nan-k'u was regarded as one of the richest treasuries of the empire.[110] There were occasions when it provided loans to the National Treasury when the latter was in serious financial difficulties.[111] However, during the Ch'un-hsi era, another treasury called the feng-chuang k'u appears to overshadow the nan-k'u in importance as it assumed a more significant role than the nan-k'u in serving as the emperor's privy purse.

The feng-chuang k'u of Hsiao-tsung was established in 1170 under the specific ruling that no funds should be withdrawn from it save for the purpose of paying military expenses and

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109. CYTC, Vol.1, ch.17, p.4a.

110. On 3/12/1167 the officer-in-charge of the nan-k'u Chiang Hsin 姜詵 reported that a tremendous amount of gold, silver, copper coins and goods was kept in this treasury. See SHY, shih-huo 51: 32, p.5690. Also on 5/2nd/1170, it was stated that a large amount of silver was stored in the nan-k'u. See SHY, shih-huo 56:7, p.5776.

111. For example, in 3rd/1171 Hsiao-tsung inquired about the 4 million min borrowed by the Ministry of Finance from the nan-k'u. See CHSC, ch.50, pp.9a-9b.

granting allowances to the ex-emperor and empress dowager.[112] It was different from the feng-chuang k'u of the Northern Sung, which was an imperial treasury.[113] Since its establishment Hsiao-tsung made it into a real storehouse for the state's reserves and it was in this particular treasury that the empire's wealth was accumulated. The date of its creation is of great significance for it was in 1170 that Yü Yün-wen was serving as chief councillor and with his support and encouragement, the emperor was adopting a more aggressive policy in foreign affairs. It is evident that the feng-chuang k'u was established for the purpose of achieving reconquest. The importance of this treasury increased further during the Ch'un-hsi era, particularly after the reform of 12th/1175, by which an important section of the nan-k'u was incorporated into it.[114] As a result, the income of the nan-k'u was drastically reduced while the feng-chuang k'u grew rapidly. The latter treasury became so rich that in 5th/1179 it was even reported that the strings used for tying the cash were rotting after

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112. Wang Ying-lin 王應麟, Yü-hai 玉海 (Taipei: Hua-lien ch'u-pan-she 華聯出版社, 1964), ch.183, pp.26a-26b.

113. Ibid., ch.183, pp.17a-18b.

114. In the reform of 12th/1175, the Upper Division of the nan-k'u (nan-shang k'u 南上庫) was incorporated into the feng-chuang k'u. See CHSC, ch.54, p.13b. Therefore what remained as the nan-k'u since 12th/1175 was the Lower Division (nan-hsia k'u 南下庫) of the Treasury.

having been kept there for years.[115] In 8th/1183 it was stated that the total value of goods and cash stored in the feng-chuang k'u amounted to over 30 million min.[116] This was indeed no small sum, as it represented 50% of the annual income received from the south-eastern region.[117]

In 6th/1183 Hsiao-tsung decided to transfer the nan-k'u back to the National Treasury. According to him this would save him the trouble of having to take care of the treasury himself.[118] However, it was soon discovered that there were other reasons why the emperor decided to lift his control over the nan-k'u. The fact that this treasury was not such an asset after all was revealed by the Minister of Finance Wang Tso 王佐, who pointed out that because of the deficit incurred by the nan-k'u, the transfer of its control to the Ministry of Finance would bring more harm than good to the latter.[119] He proposed that the

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115. In 5th/1179 the officer-in-charge of the feng-chuang k'u, Yen Ts'ang-shu 閻蒼舒, reported that out of a total of 5.3 million kuan of cash kept in this treasury, some was lost and became unaccountable for because the strings used for tying these were broken after so many years. He requested for the lost cash to be replaced. See CHSC, ch.57, p.6a.

116. Ibid., ch.60, p.11a.

117. By the end of the Ch'un-hsi era, the annual revenue from the southeast is said to be around 65.3 million min. See CYTC, Vol.1, ch.14, p.1a.

118. CHSC, ch.60, p.10a.

119. Yü-hai, ch.183, p.26a. According to the calculation made by Wang Tso, the deficit came to a total of 440,000 min. See CYTC, Vol.1, ch.17, p.4a.

nan-k'u should be incorporated into the feng-chuang k'u instead, but his proposal was not accepted by Hsiao-tsung. The emperor's refusal clearly indicates the great importance he attached to the feng-chuang k'u which functioned as his personal treasure-house for the rest of his reign. Although it was supposed to store up reserves for the purpose of emergency, during the final years of the Ch'un-hsi era, however, funds from this treasury had frequently been transferred to the imperial treasuries in the palace under the pretext of rewarding the soldiers or for the manufacturing of military equipment.[120] The Ministry of Finance was unable to do anything about it. It is evident that by the end of Hsiao-tsung's reign, the feng-chuang k'u had evolved into an important organ which served to augment the absolute power of the throne.

The Abdication of Hsiao-tsung

A turning point in the political career of Hsiao-tsung came in 10th/1187 with the death of his father, Kao-tsung. Having served the Emperor Emeritus with the greatest filiality[121] for the past twenty-five years, Hsiao-tsung responded to the event with great grief. Despite the counsel of his ministers,

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120. CYTC, Vol.1, ch.17, p.4b; Yü-hai, ch.183, p.26b.

121. Hsiao-tsung's extraordinary devotion to the Emperor Emeritus was a dominant feature in his behaviour, both within the family and in court politics. He visited his father frequently and the monthly stipends for the Te-shou palace amounted to 40,000 kuan. See WCC, ch.164, pp.1a-1b and p.2b.

he insisted on observing the mourning rites for three years.[122] The idea of abdicating must have occurred to him then, but being a responsible emperor, he found it necessary to carry out a period of intensive training for the heir-apparent to prepare him for the throne.

In 11th/1187, Hsiao-tsung issued a decree authorizing the heir-apparent to participate in the administration of the empire.[123] He also told the councillors that from then on the heir-apparent would discuss state matters with them. The emperor's decision caused much concern among the officials, including the Reader-in-waiting Yang Wan-li, who warned Hsiao-tsung regarding the possible consequence of bestowing political power upon his heir:

> ... a state should not possess two rulers and neither should the people owe allegiance to two kings. Now with Your Majesty on top and the heir-apparent appointed to take part in the administration, there are in fact two rulers in the state. From times of old there has never been a case where a state possessing two rulers was not endangered....[124]

Yang was apprehensive that the above decision would lead to political instability. He called upon the emperor to change his

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122. After Kao-tsung's death, Hsiao-tsung told Chief Councillor Wang Huai that he intended to observe mourning for a full three-year term instead of following the normal practice of the court to substitute the years with months. See CHSC, ch.63, p.15b.

123. CHSC, ch.63, p.16a.

124. For Yang Wan-li's memorial see CCC, ch.62, pp.509-11.

mind about the three years' mourning and to fully resume administrative duties himself.

Following Yang's memorial, the heir-apparent was fearful and declined to take up his newly-assigned responsibility. However, Hsiao-tsung had already made up his mind to familiarize his son with governmental matters and therefore did not accept his refusal, but speeded up the training of his heir. In 1st/1188 a new office called the "Policy Deliberation Hall" (i-shih t'ang 議事堂) was set up in the palace, where the heir-apparent was to meet the councillors on every alternate day to discuss state matters.[125] Within the same month the emperor announced to his ministers that after having participated in policy-discussion for a while, the heir-apparent was becoming well-acquainted with affairs of the empire. He also declared his intention to have the heir in attendance during subsequent court sessions held in the palace.[126]

From the above measures, it is apparent that Hsiao-tsung was grooming his heir to take over the throne as soon as possible. Nevertheless, the emperor's decision to grant more and more responsibility to the heir-apparent again led to anxiety among the ministers. In 1st/1188 the Junior Lord of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices and concurrently Left Chief Adviser

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125. SSCW, ch.27, p.2199; see also Chou Pi-ta, Ssu-ling lu 思陵錄 in WCC, ch.172, p.29b.

126. SSCW, ch.27, p.2200; WCC, ch.172, pp.55b-56a.

(tso yü-te 左諭德) of the heir-apparent, Yu Mou 尤袤, admonished the prince:

> Where power lies, the whole world will strive and hasten after it, and this is indeed to be feared! I hope Your Highness will obtain the approval of the emperor in all matters before implementing them and listen to public opinion before making decisions on them....[127]

He further advised the prince that as heir-apparent, he should by right be merely concerned with attending to the daily needs of the emperor and not get involved with other matters. Yu finally counselled the heir-apparent to decline his public duties after the internment of Kao-tsung.

From the protests of officials such as Yu Mou and Yang Wan-li, it appears that they were still hoping for the emperor to return to court to resume his normal functions. Thus successive requests were put forward by the ministers for the emperor to return to his duties at court. Nevertheless, Hsiao-tsung had decided to complete the three-year mourning period and nothing was going to make him change his mind. He made this very clear by issuing an order in 4th/1188, in which he stated that despite his earlier promise to return to court after the internment of the t'ai-shang huang, he would, however, have no peace of mind if he failed to carry out the rites in full. He thus ordered the officials not to send in any more requests regarding the

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127. CHSC, ch.64, p.2b; HTC, ch.151, p.4032.

above matter.[128] It was only after the imperial pronouncement that the ministers stopped their requests for fear of offending the emperor.

Meanwhile Hsiao-tsung continued to educate his son in the important affairs of the state and the administration of the empire. For example, in 9th/1188 he told the heir-apparent that since matters concerning rituals and ceremony had clearly been recorded in great details, it was not necessary for him to discuss these further, but he had yet to go through finance slowly with the latter. After briefing his heir on various ways to reduce military expenditure, Hsiao-tsung emphasized that 80% of the national income should be allotted to the army.[129] This clearly shows that even till the last days of his reign, finance and defence remained the topmost concern of the emperor. On another occasion, in 11th/1188, Hsiao-tsung cautioned the heir-apparent against granting imperial favours lavishly (by giving official titles to family members of the bureaucrats) so as to avoid stalling the bureaucracy.[130] It had always been the emperor's policy to reduce expenditure by cutting down the number of

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128. CHSC, ch.64, p.5a; WCC, ch.173, p.24b. The emperor was encouraged to make such a proclamation by the Revising Officer of the Department of Imperial Edicts (ch'ih-ling-suo shang-ting-kuan 敕令所刪定官) Shen Ch'ing-ch'en 沈清臣, who appears to be the only official who supported the emperor's decision to observe mourning for three years. See CHSC, ch.64, p.5a.

129. SSCW, ch.27, p.2211.

130. SSCW, ch.27, p.2214.

supernumerary posts, both in the civil as well as military services and he therefore desired his son to follow in his footsteps.

One event which might have hastened Hsiao-tsung to abdicate was the death of the Chin ruler Shih-tsung in 1st/1189. Shih-tsung was succeeded by his great grandson, who was very much younger than Hsiao-tsung himself. From Hsiao-tsung's attitude towards foreign relations, it would not be surprising if he regarded it as humiliating for him to address the young Chin ruler as his "uncle" in accordance with the stipulation of the 1165 treaty, and this may have prompted him to retire in the following month.[131] Before he finally stepped down, Hsiao-tsung's last important act was to fill the top positions of the bureaucracy with men who could assist his son in the running of the government. In 1st/1189, in a series of appointments made by the emperor, Chou Pi-ta and Liu Cheng 劉正 were appointed Left and Right Chief Councillor respectively while Wang Lin was given the position of Second Privy Councillor.[132] It was only after arranging everything in good order that Hsiao-tsung felt he could retire in peace. His great sense of responsibility and his persistent industry were shown by the fact that on the eve of his abdication in 2nd/1189 he still carried on working and made decisions on the

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131. According to one modern historian, Hsiao-tsung, being an old man of over 60 years, felt reluctant to address a 21 year-old youngster as his "uncle" and this prompted him to abdicate in the following month. See Wang Te-i, "Sung Hsiao-tsung chi ch'i shih-tai", p.23.

132. SSCW, ch.27, p.2219.

appointment of bureaucratic personnel.[133]

Having prepared his heir for taking over the throne and appointed the various councillors to lead the bureaucracy, Hsiao-tsung felt that it was time to make a public announcement regarding his decision to retire. So in 1st/1189 the emperor formally informed Left Chief Councillor Chou Pi-ta and his colleagues of his intention to abdicate in favour of his son, so that he could complete the three-year mourning term for Kao-tsung.[134] The two chief councillors were ordered to draft the imperial edict announcing his abdication. Before the end of the month, the Te-shou palace of Kao-tsung was renamed the Ch'ung-hua 重華 palace and prepared for Hsiao-tsung's retirement. In early 2nd/1189, in an abdication ceremony[135] similar to that of Kao-tsung in 1162, Hsiao-tsung finally left his throne after having reigned for twenty-seven years.

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133. SSCW, ch.27, p.2220.

134. SSCW, ch.27, p.2220; WCC, ch.173, p.46a.

135. SSCW, ch.27, p.2220; WCC, ch.173, pp.50a-50b.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: HSIAO-TSUNG AND CONSOLIDATION

In his comments on the reign of Hsiao-tsung, the renowned Ch'ing author of Sung Lun, Wang Fu-chih, criticizes the emperor for his inability to attain reconquest and for his lack of fighting spirit after the Sung defeat at Fu-li.[1] He sees Hsiao-tsung as a frustrated emperor who did not succeed in accomplishing much for his empire after failing in his first attempt to achieve hui-fu. Similarly, the well-known Ming commentator on the Sung-shih chi-shih pen-mo, Chang P'u 張溥, also states that at the beginning of Hsiao-tsung's administration, there were ample opportunities for recovery or restoration (fu 復, which also means reconquest), but these opportunities were lost because the emperor was unable to make good use of them.[2] Even the compilers of the Sung Official History, while recognising Hsiao-tsung as the best among the Southern Sung rulers and commending him for bringing about an improvement in Sung foreign relations, also appear to be apologetic for the emperor's failure to fulfil his

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1. SL, ch.11, pp.179-181.

2. SSPM, ch.78, p.172 (The version used for this particular footnote is that published by San-min shu-chü 三民書局, Taipei, 1963, as the Peking edition used in the other footnotes does not contain the comments of Chang P'u).

military ambition by commenting that it was the will of Heaven that reconquest did not take place.[3]

From the remarks cited above, it is obvious that the historians concerned are so taken up by the issue of reconquest that they overlook one very important aspect of Hsiao-tsung's administration, namely, his continuing consolidation of the Southern Sung regime. From our present study of Hsiao-tsung's reign, we find that Wang Fu-chih's criticism is not totally accurate as the defeat at Fu-li did not really dampen the emperor's enthusiasm to achieve reconquest. In fact, as we have seen in Chapters IV and V of this thesis, it was after the abortive campaign and the establishment of peace that consolidation actually took place. Also, it was the dynastic goal to achieve hui-fu that spurred Hsiao-tsung and his court to greater efforts in reconstructing and strengthening their empire. In assessing the administration of Hsiao-tsung, both Wang Fu-chih and Chang P'u fail to point out his outstanding achievements in domestic affairs. Contrary to their opinions that the Hsiao-tsung era was one without much accomplishment, it has been shown in the preceding chapters that during this period, much progress had been attained in the various areas of administration, defence, agriculture, finance and foreign relations. By effectively consolidating the Southern Sung, Hsiao-tsung not only succeeded in preserving the war-shaken regime which he had inherited from his father, but he also provided it with a strong political order, a sustaining

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3. SS, ch.35, p.692.

economy and a sufficiently solid defence that enabled the dynasty to last for another ninety years under increasingly difficult circumstances.

If looking back on the reign of Kao-tsung gives us a clearer understanding of the tasks confronting Hsiao-tsung at the time of his accession, then looking ahead to the conditions of thirteenth century China can help us evaluate the great significance of Hsiao-tsung's efforts. In spite of the worsening political, economic and military situation faced by the Southern Sung during its final decades, the dynasty successfully withstood the Mongol invasions for over forty years after the fall of Chin in 1234, the longest record in the history of Mongol conquests across Eurasia. This remarkable resilience portrayed by the Southern Sung in its final years clearly demonstrates the strength of Hsiao-tsung's consolidation. Indeed, it can be said that had it not been for the exceptional military superiority of the Mongols, the Southern Sung could have lasted in consolidation for centuries more.

Political Order

It has been mentioned in the Introduction that Hsiao-tsung achieved consolidation through the twin measures of absolutism and centralization. It has also been suggested that in addition to the above principles, the emperor's adherence to the politics of accommodation also contributed to his success in augmenting imperial power. As we have seen through the study of

court politics during the Ch'ien-tao and Ch'un-hsi eras, Hsiao-tsung's absolutism was not necessarily bad nor was it oppressive. On the other hand, it was through absolutism at court and centralized control throughout the empire with an effective bureaucracy that the emperor succeeded in establishing a political order that endured for the duration of the Southern Sung dynasty.

While it is undeniable that the Southern Sung founder, Kao-tsung, had inherited the dynastic traditions of absolute government and centralized administration from his Northern Sung predecessors, he was nevertheless obliged by the political circumstances of the time to delegate extensive power to his chief councillor, Ch'in Kuei.[4] However, when it came to the reign of Hsiao-tsung, imperial power was greatly strengthened and as a result, absolutism not only developed to a great extent but it also became the symbol of imperial government from then onwards. The absolute power of the monarch was recognised and respected by all political elements, including the most powerful and dominating chief councillor. The stabilizing effect of this can clearly be seen in the political development of the post-Hsiao-tsung era. Furthermore, it will also be shown that the politics of accommodation, which was initiated by Kao-tsung and carefully nurtured by Hsiao-tsung, remained an essential factor in integrating the Southern Sung empire until the end of the dynasty.

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4. See Chapter II, pp.56-69.

The assertive leadership which characterized imperial rule under Kao-tsung and Hsiao-tsung did not continue into the reigns of their successors. In fact, the failure of imperial leadership was essentially the reason which led to the emergence of powerful ministers and the accompanying evils of factionalism and power struggles, which were clearly portrayed in court politics under successive rulers. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that despite the general deterioration after Hsiao-tsung's reign, the political order consolidated by him continued to function through various national crises. The first political crisis developed when Hsiao-tsung's successor, Kuang-tsung 光宗 (r. 1189-1194), who was suffering from mental illness, failed to perform the funeral rites at the time of Hsiao-tsung's death in 1194. This scandalous violation of filial piety by the emperor, a crisis of confidence in Chinese political culture, led to much indignation at court. A group of officials under the leadership of the Administrator of the Military Bureau, Chao Ju-yü 趙汝愚 proposed that Prince Chia 嘉 (the future Ning-tsung) should succeed to the throne to carry out the mourning rites neglected by his father. With the help of the Administrator of the Palace Postern, Han T'o-chou, who was a nephew of Empress Dowager Wu 吳 (Kao-tsung's widow), Chao was able to obtain the approval of the empress dowager to officiate in the abdication ceremony of Kuang-tsung.[5]

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5. For the events leading to the forced abdication of Kuang-tsung, see his annals in SS, ch.36, pp.709-10 and annals of Ning-tsung, SS, ch.37, pp.714-5; HTC, ch.153, pp.4108-11; Yeh Shao-weng 葉紹翁 Ssu-ch'ao wen-chien lu 四朝聞見錄 (TSCC ed.), chia-chi 甲集, pp.10-11 and ting-chi 丁集, pp.107-8.

It is interesting to note that the transfer of the throne from Kuang-tsung to Ning-tsung (r. 1194-1224) was accomplished through the collaboration of the Outer and Inner Courts which, despite their differences, were willing to cooperate with each other to resolve the national crisis caused by the mental illness of the reigning emperor. This was clearly an example of accommodative politics in practice, since both parties saw that mutual cooperation was necessary in order to restore political stability. It was also an indication that the political institutions of the Outer Court and Inner Court, having been placed in their proper order during Hsiao-tsung's reign, were sufficiently stabilized to enable such a peaceful succession. As we may recall, it had always been Hsiao-tsung's policy to balance the power of the Outer Court with that of the Inner Court so that absolutism would prevail. The concept of absolutism had been so ingrained in the minds of all officials that in spite of the emperor's illness which made it impossible for him to rule, nobody, from either the bureaucracy or the Inner Court, took advantage of the situation to further his own ends by usurping imperial power. Instead, it was agreed by all the parties concerned, namely, the Outer Court ministers, the Inner Court functionaries as well as members of the imperial family that absolute power belonged to the emperor. Since the emperor was unable to exercise this power effectively, it was appropriate for the officials to restore the monarch to his proper function by replacing the incapacitated ruler with his son in order to ensure the continued stability of the political system.

Absolutism as a vital element of imperial rule continued to play a significant role in maintaining the political order from then on. Although Ning-tsung was undoubtedly much more fit than his father to assume the position of imperial leader, he nevertheless proved to be a weak and ineffectual ruler. For the duration of his thirty-year reign, the court was dominated by two extremely powerful officials who served the emperor successively. The first of these was Han T'o-chou, who had earlier played a decisive role in Ning-tsung's accession. As the nephew of the empress dowager and the grand uncle of Empress Han, Ning-tsung's wife, Han was able to make use of his palace connections to overthrow Chief Councillor Chao Ju-yü soon after Ning-tsung took over the throne.[6] The downfall of Chao was followed by a purge of his sympathisers by Han and an attack on Tao-hsüeh (also known as Li-hsüeh), the school of thought to which many of his associates and Han's critics belonged. The attack culminated in the proscription of Tao-hsüeh in 1196 and the subsequent persecution of many prominent scholar-officials who were accused of belonging to this school.[7] Although Han was never officially designated chief councillor, he effectively functioned as one. From 1196 to the time of his death in 1207, he was the most powerful man at court, given full control of the government by

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6. For an account of the power struggle between Han and Chao, See SSPM, ch.82, pp.911-918.

7. For the proscription of Tao-hsüeh, see Ch'iao-ch'uan ch'iao-sou 樵川樵叟 (pseu.), Ch'ing-yüan tang-chin 慶元黨禁 (SKCP ed.); SSPM, ch.80, pp.872-77.

the emperor. However, because of his high-handed action in dealing with the officials and his persecution of Tao-hsüeh, Han became extremely unpopular. Probably in an attempt to consolidate his position, Han initiated a northern campaign against the Jurchen in 1206.[8] This was a fatal error for the disastrous defeat of the Sung eventually led to his assassination by his political enemies the following year.

In examining Han T'o-chou's power vis-a-vis that of the emperor, it should be noted that although Ning-tsung granted a tremendous amount of authority to Han, he was by no means a mere puppet in the hands of his favourite minister. It is true that being the weak and dependent ruler that he was, he preferred not to exercise his ultimate power so long as Han was able to keep the situation under control. However, this does not mean that absolute authority was no longer held by the emperor. This is shown by the fact that after the death of his wife, Ning-tsung went against Han's advice by installing someone of his own choice as the new empress. This was Empress Yang 楊, who became a great enemy of Han and was a major figure involved in the

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8. It is said that Han had been advised to make a name for himself through the northern campaign so as to consolidate his own position at court. See HTC, ch.156, p.4216; SS, ch.474, p.13774. Nevertheless, it should also be pointed out that he was also prompted by objective considerations for the internal disturbances in Chin at this time led to widespread belief about its imminent downfall. See HTC, pp.4216-17; and Lu Ch'eng-hou 陸成侯, "Lun Han T'o-chou論韓侂胄," Shih-hsüeh yüeh-k'an 史學月刊 (Honan, 1958), No.7, pp.14-20.

assassination plot against Han in 1207.[9] Also, even though the emperor was not named among those who plotted the murder of Han, he was reportedly informed in advance of the intended killing and granted his tacit consent.[10] Han's tragic downfall shows that even the most powerful minister was wholly dependent on imperial favour for his political survival. It was mainly due to Hsiao-tsung's success in consolidating the absolute authority of the emperor that ever since his reign, imperial power remained far above ministerial power, even under the administration of his less capable successors.

After the removal of Han T'o-chou, Ning-tsung found a substitute to take over the administration, namely, Shih Mi-yüan. Shih played an active role in the murder of Han and after the latter's demise, rose rapidly in his career. He served as the sole chief councillor for Ning-tsung from 1209 to 1224 and continued to do so for Li-tsung until 1233. His twenty-five years of consecutive service even surpassed the period of Ch'in Kuei's chief councillorship. While imperial favour was undoubtedly an

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9. Empress Yang never forgave Han for advising Ning-tsung against her installation and later played a major role in his assassination. See HTC, ch.156, p.4204 and ch.158, p.4269; SSPM, ch.83, p.933.

10. While most sources claim that Han's assassination was carried out without the emperor's knowledge nor consent, there are some which refer to the issuing of a "secret order" (mi-chih 密旨) pertaining to the killing. See HTC, ch.158, p.4269; SS, ch.38, and ch.474, p.13776; SSPM, ch.83, p.933. Also, it is unlikely that the emperor was totally in the dark, since those involved in the murder were subsequently not punished by him but were rewarded with promotions.

important factor which led to Shih's rapid rise in power, it should be recognised that it was his ability to consolidate his position that enabled him to stay in office for such a long period. Shih was the son of ex-Chief Councillor Shih Hao, and having come from a prominent bureaucratic family, he not only had the support of many bureaucrats but was also familiar with the politics of his fellow-officials. Unlike his predecessor Han T'o-chou, Shih took care to accommodate the Tao-hsüeh followers, thereby gaining the approval of this influential group of scholar-officials.[11] Furthermore, unlike Han, Shih had few political enemies and maintained extremely good relations with influential elements in the palace.[12] Thus by adhering to the principle of accommodation, Shih was able to play a much better game than Han in the realm of power politics.

Shih Mi-yüan's power grew to such an extent that when Ning-tsung died in 1224 without having designated his heir, the chief councillor arbitrarily set aside the elder adopted prince in favour of the younger adopted prince as the next emperor, namely, Li-tsung (r. 1224-1264). His role as "emperor-maker"

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11. After coming into power, Shih Mi-yüan revived the Tao-hsüeh school by granting posthumous honours to several prominent figures who had suffered persecution under Han T'o-chou and by recalling many of its surviving members to office. See HTC, ch.158, pp.4279-82; SS, ch.414, p.12417.

12. Shih maintained close relations with the crown prince, Prince Jung 竑, who had studied under him, and with Empress Yang; both were his fellow-conspirators in the plot to assassinate Han T'o-chou. See HTC, ch.158, p.4269.

and the subsequent death of the older prince[13] greatly damaged Shih's political standing among the scholar-officials. In order to repair his own image and the image of the court, Shih resorted to manipulative politics by appointing to high positions several veteran leaders of the Tao-hsüeh school[14] although in actual fact, they were not given much power nor did they stay long in office. It is worth mentioning that Shih's image-building was apparently successful, as shown by the fact that among the four most powerful chief councillors of the Southern Sung,[15] he was the only one whose biography in the Official History is not included among the "Evil Officials" (chien-ch'en 姦臣).

The reign of Li-tsung saw an even greater rise in Shih's power because of boundless imperial favours bestowed upon him. As Ning-tsung before him, Li-tsung in his forty-years' reign continued to delegate sweeping authority to his chief councillors and favourites. It is intriguing to observe that the young emperor quickly learned the tactics of accommodative politics from Chief Councillor Shih Mi-yüan and practised these himself. While for much of his reign Li-tsung is said to have neglected

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13. After the elder prince had been sent away to Hu-chou 湖州, an uprising took place there in his name protesting that the succession was illegal. In the aftermath of this ill-fated uprising, the innocent but implicated prince was ordered to commit suicide by the court. See SSPM, ch.86, p.993.

14. HTC, ch.162, pp.4422-24.

15. The four powerful chief councillors were, in chronological order, Ch'in Kuei, Han T'o-chou, Shih Mi-yüan and Chia Ssu-tao 賈似道.

the administration of his empire in pursuit of sensual pleasures,[16] he did not forget to cover up his personal weakness and the abuses of his administration by honouring Tao-hsüeh, which was proclaimed the state orthodoxy in 1241. Although he hardly went beyond lip service, his elevation of Tao-hsüeh (or Li-hsüeh) earned him the posthumous title of Li-tsung, the emperor who honoured the Li-hsüeh school of Confucianism.[17] Li-tsung's exhibition of respect for ideological authority in the form of Tao-hsüeh also reminds us of Hsiao-tsung's efforts in projecting a good Confucian image for himself by accommodating the scholar-officials. Thus despite the growth of absolutism, the emperors found that it was still necessary to conform to the requirements of accommodative politics in order to maintain political stability. This was especially so since the 1330s, when the stability of the Southern Sung empire was increasingly shaken by foreign threat and internal disturbances. Externally the dynasty began to face a new challenge with the fall of Chin and the coming of the Mongols. Internally the court was engaged in suppressing the armed forces led by Li Ch'üan 李全, the "loyalist army" leader from Shan-tung who first rebelled against the Chin but eventually turned against the Sung by surrendering

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16. Annals of Li-tsung, SS, ch.45, p.889; SJIS, ch.2, p.91.

17. The compilers of the Sung Official History credit Li-tsung for having sanctioned the state orthodoxy and mention that although it was not effectively carried out during his reign, he nevertheless paved the way for future emperors to implement it fully. See SS, ch.45, p.889.

to the Mongols.[18] Although Li was defeated within a few years, his betrayal led to some amount of tension in the Huai region and caused a great deal of anxiety to the Sung court. In the face of the mounting international crisis and internal dangers, it is not surprising that Li-tsung should all the more resort to using Tao-hsüeh to boost the political prestige of his court.[19]

After an extremely lengthy reign, Li-tsung finally died in 1264 and was succeeded by his son, Tu-tsung 度宗 (r. 1264-1274), whose administration was not much an improvement upon that of his predecessor. In fact, Tu-tsung followed the footsteps of Ning-tsung and Li-tsung by allowing his favourite minister to take charge of the government and bestowing upon him numerous favours and privileges. The chief councillor so favoured by Tu-tsung was Chia Ssu-tao, subsequently labelled the "Bad Last Minister" of the Southern Sung.[20] He was not actually the last minister nor was he as bad as recorded in traditional history. He was noted for introducing various economic reforms which aimed at increasing state income but which alienated many bureaucrats (who were also large landowners) against him. It was unfortunate

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18. For an account on the rebellion of Li Ch'üan, see SSPM, ch.87.

19. By honouring Tao-hsüeh the Southern Sung court was in fact employing cultural propaganda to boost its political prestige. See James T.C. Liu, "... a Neo-Confucian School ...," p.502.

20. For a scholarly study on Chia Ssu-tao, see Herbert Franke, "Chia Ssu-tao (1213-1275): a 'Bad Last Minister'?" in Confucian Personalities, pp.217-234.

that he had to encounter the Mongol invasions and had to bear the blame for the Sung defeat. Following his dismissal in 1275, he was sentenced to exile and was murdered while on the way to his place of banishment.[21] His tragic death is reminiscent of that of Han T'o-chou earlier, and brings home the point that the career of chief ministers, however powerful they might once have been, was by no means insured. Besides the factor of imperial support, it was also essential for the chief ministers to observe the politics of accommodation. Both Chia Ssu-tao and Han T'o-chou did not fare as well as Shih Mi-yüan because of their alienation of the bureaucrats and their failure in accommodating them.

By the time of Chia Ssu-tao's demise in 1275, the Southern Sung was on the verge of collapse. Tu-tsung died the previous year and was succeeded by a child emperor, with the empress dowager acting as regent. It is worth noting that even on the eve of the Mongol invasions when many officials fled from the court, the empress dowager still followed the principle of accommodation by granting promotions to the officials at court so that they might be persuaded to stay on with the government.[22] After the fall of Lin-an in early 1276, two other child emperors were put on the throne by a court-in-exile headed by a group of loyalist ministers. The fugitive court fled from place to place

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21. Biography of Chia Ssu-tao, SS, ch.474, p.13787.

22. HTC, ch.181, p.4950.

through the provinces of Fu-chien and Kuang-tung until it was finally destroyed by the Mongols in 1279.

In the final analysis, it can be said that the political order consolidated by Hsiao-tsung upon the principles of absolutism, centralization and accommodation helped to keep the empire integrated until its last days. Despite the decline of imperial leadership, the rise of powerful ministers and the prevalence of factional struggles, political stability generally continued with the emperor being upheld as the symbol of absolute authority. It is interesting to note that the ineffectual emperors such as Ning-tsung and Li-tsung enjoyed political longevity, just as their more competent predecessors had, even though conditions grew steadily worse under their administrations. Also, it should be emphasized that although the power of certain ministers rose to unprecedented heights under the reigns of these ineffectual rulers, yet not a single one among the powerful ministers ever usurped the throne or even attempted to do so. In spite of their failure to act as leaders, the emperors continued to rule as absolute monarchs, and the political system continued to function through the years of decline, without being disrupted by either usurpation or mutinies even during times of imminent danger.

Finally, it is important to observe the moderating effect of accommodative politics upon excessive absolutism. Even though absolutism in the hands of ineffectual emperors gave rise to many abuses, yet the rulers were careful not to go beyond certain limits, and the ideological authority of the scholar-officials was generally respected, in theory if not in practice, as

illustrated by the example of Li-tsung. It is clear that both the emperors and the ministers had to practise accommodative politics in order to safeguard their own interests and the well-being of the state. This in no small way contributed to the strength of the political order in the midst of turmoil and stress.

Socio-economic Order

As discussed in earlier chapters, Hsiao-tsung's consolidation programme not only aimed at achieving political stability through absolutism and centralization, but it also directed a great deal of attention towards improving the social and economic welfare of the people through various agrarian and financial reforms. In fact, as stated in Chapter II, finance played a crucial role in the founding of the Southern Sung and continued to function as a most essential factor in the maintenance of a viable socio-economic order for the duration of the dynasty. Through the many years of peace and guided by the policy of frugality, Hsiao-tsung not only succeeded in reviving the empire's economy, but also greatly increased its financial strength, particularly by the accumulation of wealth in the special imperial treasury of feng-chuang k'u.[23] Although it cannot be denied that this treasury had become an instrument for augmenting imperial power, it should nevertheless be noted that the tremendous amount of resources kept there was later used to

23. See Chapter V, pp. 237-39.

relieve the state of its financial difficulties, especially during the mid-thirteenth century.

The political decline in the post-Hsiao-tsung era discussed in the preceding section was accompanied by general deterioration in the socio-economic conditions of the country. The state was increasingly troubled by problems of extremely heavy expenditure, unequal distribution of land, spiral inflation and other economic ills, especially towards the end of the dynasty.[24] However, it is intriguing to note that despite all these problems, the Southern Sung was still regarded as the richest and most prosperous country in the world on the eve of the Mongol invasions.[25] As mentioned in the Introduction, the favourable conditions in the Yang-tzu region and the rapid commercialization and economic prosperity of the south-east helped to sustain the empire financially. In addition, it should be recognised that Hsiao-tsung had contributed in many ways to the highly impressive economic advancement of Southern Sung China.

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24. For a discussion on the various problems besetting the Southern Sung dynasty during its final years, see Chang Yin-lin 張蔭麟 "Nan-Sung wang-kuo-shih pu 南宋亡國史補," SSYCC, Vol.2, pp.105-122.

25. See Jacques Gernet, Daily Life In China On The Eve Of The Mongol Invasion, 1250-1276 trans. by H.M. Wright (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970), pp.15-16. Late Sung writers have also provided us with interesting accounts of the empire's prosperity, especially in the capital area of Lin-an. See Nai Te-weng 耐得翁 (pseu.), Tu-ch'eng chi-sheng 都城紀勝; Anonymous, Hsi-hu lao-jen fang-sheng lu 西湖老人繁勝錄; Wu Tzu-mu 吳自牧, Meng-liang-lu 夢粱錄; and Chou Mi 周密, Wu-lin chiu-shih 武林舊事. These four books are compiled in Meng Yüan-lao, et.al., 孟元老等, Tung-ching meng-hua lu (wai ssu-chung) 東京夢華錄(外四種) (Shanghai: Ku-tien wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she 古典文學出版社, 1957).

Even though Hsiao-tsung's administration had been criticized by one twelfth century official as "failing to make the state wealthy and prosperous" (wu fu-shu chih-hsiao 無富庶之效) because of the heavy military expenditure,[26] we find that the above statement is not really true. It is undeniable that military expenses largely sapped the state of its income, but, on the other hand, the plentiful resources of the south-east and the prudent financial policy of Hsiao-tsung greatly strengthened the Southern Sung economy and enabled it to stand the financial strain caused by the irresponsible policies of later emperors. A distinct difference in fiscal policy can be seen in the extremely careful management of paper money by Hsiao-tsung,[27] in contrast to the careless over-printing of notes during the reigns of his successors. From the time of Ning-tsung onwards, the cautious approach of Hsiao-tsung in financial management had been abandoned because of the urgent need to meet the high military costs incurred. One convenient though short-sighted measure adopted by the court to solve its financial problem was by issuing more paper money.[28] This resulted in a tremendous increase in the amount of paper currency in circulation since the

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26. Yüan Hsieh 袁燮, "Hsing-chuan of Huang Tu 黃度," in Hsieh-chai chi 絜齋集 (TSCC ed.), ch.13, p.212.

27. See Chapter V, pp. 231-32.

28. For an account of the court's monetary policy which led to inflation in late Southern Sung China, see Ch'üan Han-sheng, "Sung-mo ti t'ung-huo p'eng-chang chi ch'i tui-yü wu-chia ti ying-hsiang", SSYCC, Vol.2, pp.283-325.

thirteenth century. While during the Ch'ien-tao and Ch'un-hsi eras the average amount of paper money in circulation was around 20 million min, it had increased to 230 million during the later part of Ning-tsung's reign and rose to 650 million in the mid-1240s.[29]

Although initially the issue of paper currency enabled the state to meet its expenditure, the fact that it was printed in large amounts without proper backing of copper cash[30] inevitably led to its devaluation. The consequent high prices of goods and high cost of living undoubtedly had an adverse effect upon the livelihood of the people, especially among the urban population. From a study made by Professor Ch'üan Han-sheng, it is found that the prices of goods had doubled in the period between Ning-tsung's reign and the first phase of Li-tsung's reign (from 1225 to 1239), and even rocketted to ten times their previous value in the second phase of Li-tsung's reign from 1240 to 1264.[31] On the eve of Li-tsung's death in 1264, Chief Councillor Chia Ssu-tao, in an attempt to remedy the defects of the fiscal system, introduced a new paper currency known as

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29. For the figures quoted, see SSYCC, Vol.2, pp.286-7.

30. The decrease in the value of paper money has been attributed to the fact that it was not sufficiently backed by copper cash. This had often been pointed out by the officials of the time. See SHY, hsing-fa 刑法, 2: 42-43; SHY, chih-kuan 43: 179; Chen Te-hsiu 真德秀, Chen Wen-chung-kung wen-chi 真文忠公文集 (SPTK ed.), ch.32, p.500.

31. See Ch'üan Han-sheng, "Sung-mo ti t'ung-huo p'eng-chang...," p.306 and p.313.

chin-yin hsien-ch'ien kuan-tzu 金銀現錢關子, "gold, silver, cash exchange medium".[32] Instead of checking inflation, however, the introduction of this new note caused prices to rise even higher and conditions worsened during the reign of Tu-tsung.[33]

In addition to the problem of inflation, the late Southern Sung government was also plagued by the problem of concentration of land ownership in the hands of the rich and powerful officials. Less serious in the early years of the dynasty under the administration of Kao-tsung and Hsiao-tsung, it became worse as the influential officials were able to accumulate more land at the expense of the populace, especially during Li-tsung's reign.[34] The gravity of this problem was an important factor that prompted Chia Ssu-tao to introduce his agrarian reforms in the 1260s. His most important measure was the "Public Field Laws" (kung-t'ien-fa 公田法) by which one-third of privately-owned land exceeding a certain limit was to be bought by the state and converted into public fields, the income from which would be used to meet military expenditures.[35] It was decided to implement the reform

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32. Although the name of this new paper currency sounded attractive, it was not convertible into gold or silver or cash. See Lien-sheng Yang, Money and Credit in China, p.57.

33. Wu Tzu-mu 吳自牧, Meng-Liang lu, in Meng Yüan-lao et.al., Tung-ching meng-hua lu (wai ssu-chung), ch.13, p.238; HTC, ch.177, p.4849; biography of Chia Ssu-tao, SS, ch.474, p.13782.

34. See Chang Yin-lin, op.cit., pp.112-3.

35. HTC, ch.177, p.4831; Herbert Franke, "Chia Ssu-tao...," pp.229-230.

first in the region of Che-hsi 浙西 (where the problem of land concentration was most serious) and to introduce it later to other parts of the country. However, because of strong opposition by the landowners, the reform was merely carried out in the Che-hsi area during the period of its implementation from 1263 to 1275. While the reform succeeded in increasing state income, it alienated many officials who were large landowners as well. This had a significant effect upon the last years of the Southern Sung dynasty, since many who were antagonised by Chia's policy became less loyal to the Sung and a considerable number of the officials even surrendered to the Mongols. This was undoubtedly a major factor that hastened the downfall of the dynasty.[36] Chia also caused much hatred among the generals by his enforcement of a strict audit of army accounts that required the reimbursement of unjustifiable expenditures.[37] It is therefore not surprising that the generals who had surrendered to the Mongols conveniently put the blame on Chia for their own defection.[38]

Nevertheless, from the fall of the Southern Sung dynasty, it is significant that despite the general socio-economic

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36. Herbert Franke, "Chia Ssu-tao...," p.230; Chang Yin-lin, op.cit., pp.121-22.

37. HTC, ch.176, p.4812; annals of Li-tsung, SS, ch.45, p.878.

38. After the fall of Lin-an in 1276, the Mongol ruler Kublai inquired of the Sung generals the reason for their surrender, and they replied that it was because of Chia's prejudice against the military. See HTC, ch.225, p.4958; Sung Lien 宋濂, Yüan Shih 元史 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1977), ch.9, p.180.

deterioration that imposed great hardship upon the people, there were no large-scale peasant uprisings against the government, very unlike the usual pattern of dynastic cycle experienced by other major Chinese dynasties.[39] In analysing the reasons behind this intriguing problem, one comes to the conclusion that the socio-economic order of the Southern Sung was at least tolerable, if not actually solid. As mentioned earlier, Hsiao-tsung's agrarian and financial measures had contributed much to increasing the state's wealth and improving the livelihood of the people. In addition, there were several other factors which contributed significantly to the maintenance of socio-economic stability of the dynasty. Among these were the efforts of the Southern Sung government in lessening the economic burden of the poor through a more equitable system of taxation and services, the maintenance of an effective system of famine-relief administration and the functioning of the tenancy system.

As mentioned in Chapter II, the ching-chieh-fa represents an important effort on the part of the Southern Sung government

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39. While major dynasties in Chinese history such as Ch'in, Han, T'ang, Ming and Ch'ing were all beset by large-scale peasant uprisings and internal rebellions during their last years, this did not happen to the Southern Sung. Although small-scale uprisings did take place here and there, these were usually suppressed before they could pose any danger to the state. For accounts of Sung peasant rebellions, see Su Chin-yüan 蘇金源 and Li Ch'un-pu 李春圃, Sung-tai san-tz'u nung-min ch'i-i shih-liao hui-pien 宋代三次農民起義史料彙編 (Peking, 1963); Kuan Li-ch'ing 關履卿, "Lun Liang-Sung nung-min chan-cheng" 論兩宋農民戰爭, Li-shih yen-chiu 歷史研究, No.2 (April, 1962), pp.76-86; Hua Shan 華山, "Nan-Sung Shao-ting Yuan-p'ing chien ti Chiang-Min-Kuang nung-min ta ch'i-i 南宋紹定端平間的江閩廣農民大起義", Wen-shih che 文史哲, No.3 (1956), pp.41-48.

to attain more equitable taxes and services among the rural population. During the time of Hsiao-tsung the government was also noted for promoting two very important measures which helped to bring about socio-economic stability in the rural areas, namely, the Charitable Service system (i-i 義役) and the Communal Loan Granary system (she-ts'ang 社倉). In the Charitable Service system,[40] an endowed estate was set up for reimbursing village officers called upon to perform local services such as collecting taxes, maintaining order etc. As the servicemen often had to bear the costs of local services themselves, many found it a great burden and some even became bankrupt after serving as village officers. The i-i emerged as one solution to the problem of local services and was found to be an effective means of relieving the financial burden imposed upon the servicemen. Although it was first established by the people themselves, the government played an important role in encouraging its adoption in many parts of the empire. Fan Ch'eng-ta, who served as the Administrator of Ch'u 處 prefecture in Liang-Che in 1169, was especially noted for championing its cause.[41]

Similarly, the Communal Loan Granary system also functioned as a relief measure to the agrarian community. Under

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40. For studies on the i-i system, see Wang Te-i, "Nan-Sung i-i k'ao" 南宋義役考 in Sung-shih yen-chiu lun-chi 宋史研究論集 (Taipei: Shang-wu, 1968); Sudō Yoshiyuki, "Nan-Sō ni okeru Gi-Eki no setsuritsu to sono unei" 南宋における義役の設立とその運営 in Sōdai shi kenkyū 宋代史研究 (Tokyo: Tōyō Bunko 東洋文庫, 1969), pp.263-304.

41. See the tomb inscription for Fan Ch'eng-ta in WCC, ch.61, pp.13b-14a.

this system, grain was granted to the people as relief loans in summer (before the harvesting season) to be repaid after harvest in winter.[42] The granary was independently managed at the village level by village officers and community leaders. In most cases, the initial capital was granted from government granaries although in several places, generous officials and the wealthy contributed grain from their own households. The she-ts'ang fa was introduced by Chu Hsi in the Ch'ung-an 崇安 prefecture in Fu-chien in 1168. Upon Chu's request in 1181, Hsiao-tsung issued an edict encouraging the adoption of this system in the various prefectures of the empire.[43]

The communal grain granary was one of the most important preventive measures carried out by the government in the area of famine-relief administration. Besides the communal loan granary, there were many other types of granaries which also played a role in famine relief. Apart from the establishment of granaries, the government also implemented many other measures in relief administration such as the promotion of agriculture, remission

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42. A description of the Communal Loan Granary system is found in the Yang Lien-sheng, Money and Credit in China, p.76.

43. SS, ch.35, p.677. For the effectiveness of the system in relief administration, see the comments of Chen Te-hsiu in Chen Wen-chung-kung wen-chi, ch.10, p.190: "Tsou chih shih-erh hsien she-ts'ang chuang 奏置十二縣社倉狀" (Memorial for the establishment of Communal loan granaries in the twelve prefectures).

of taxes, provision of state loans etc.[44] It should be pointed out that the overall effective relief administration of the Southern Sung was a significant factor for the lack of large-scale peasant rebellions during this period.[45]

The development of the tenancy system in Southern Sung China also helped to alleviate the suffering of the poor to some extent. While the increase in population and the problem of land concentration greatly reduced the size of land owned by the average farmers and deprived many of their fields, it should nevertheless be noted that the tenancy system helped to provide a means of livelihood to the poverty-stricken peasants.[46] Many small farmers or peasants without any land of their own sought employment by becoming tenants in the farms owned by the landlords or in state-owned lands. Despite the high rental and oppression by the landlords, generally peasants with insufficient land were able to make a living through the tenancy system. Furthermore, the government also played an important role by encouraging wealthy landowners to recruit refugees or other

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44. For a detailed study on famine-relief administration of the Southern Sung, see Wang Te-i, Sung-tai chai-huang ti chiu-chi cheng-ts'e 宋代災荒的救濟政策 (Taipei: Chung-kuo hsüeh-shu chu-chuo chiang-chu wei-yüan hui 中國學術著作獎助委員會, 1970).

45. Ibid., p.9.

46. See Liang Keng-yao 梁庚堯, Nan-Sung ti nung-ts'un ching-chi 南宋的農村經濟 (Taipei: Lien-ching ch'u-pan shih-yeh kung-ssu 聯經出版事業公司, 1984), Chapter II: "Nan-Sung nung-ts'un ti t'u-ti fen-p'ei yü tsu-tien chih-tu" 南宋農村的土地分配與租佃制度.

poverty-stricken peasants as tenants, thus helping to solve the problem or unemployment among the agrarian population.[47]

In considering the factors responsible for stabilizing the socio-economic order of the Southern Sung, it is worth noting that the system of taxation, though far from satisfactory, also helped to preserve the order by preventing it from a total breakdown. As stated in earlier chapters, the Southern Sung government was noted for its policy of heavy taxation. Nevertheless, it is significant that the new taxes introduced by Kao-tsung and maintained by Hsiao-tsung consisted largely of indirect taxes[48] and that the additional tax burdens were usually imposed upon commercial activities and in urban areas. This means that the imposition of these supplementary taxes did not necessarily cause more suffering to the peasants, whose burden was on the whole still bearable. Furthermore, it was government policy since Hsiao-tsung's time to lessen the burden of the peasants by remitting taxes during times of bad harvests. The relatively less heavy burden of Southern Sung peasants (in comparison to other dynasties) may be an important reason for the lack of large-scale peasant rebellions during the final years of the Southern Sung. It may also be pointed out that the problem of inflation, while causing great hardship to the urban population, did not affect the poor peasants as much since they struggled to make a living by relying upon natural resources.

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47. Ibid.

48. See Chapter II, pp.80-81.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, Hsiao-tsung's legacy of the feng-chuang k'u also played a crucial role in the financial management of the late Southern Sung empire. The importance of this treasury was increasingly felt from the beginning of the thirteenth century. In 1204, for example, Han T'o-chou withdrew 10,000 taels of gold from the feng-chuang k'u to finance the northern campaign.[49] Apart from paying military expenses, the treasury also helped to provide relief to the poverty-stricken populace in later years. This was frequently noted during the 1240s and 1250s when the empire was ravaged by natural calamities and war. The richness of the feng-chuang k'u was clearly revealed by the fact that despite the many withdrawals made during the past few decades, it still retained lots of reserves which helped to finance the defence of the empire during its last years.[50] In the final analysis, the establishment of the feng-chuang k'u by Hsiao-tsung not only contributed to the socio-economic stability of the empire during times of economic crises but also helped to prolong the life of the Southern Sung dynasty by providing the enormous sums required for its defence.

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49. HTC, ch.156, p.4216.

50. In 12th/1274 Chia Ssu-tao withdrew from the feng-chuang k'u 100,000 taels of gold, 500,000 taels of silver and 10 million strings of kuan-tzu for the purpose of defence. See HTC, ch.180, pp.4934-35.

Foreign Relations and Defence

While the maintenance of a viable socio-economic order enabled the Southern Sung to withstand foreign invasions for several decades without being in the meantime undermined internally by any large-scale peasant uprisings, the ability of the empire to face up to military challenges from the powerful Mongols should, however, be attributed to the strength of its defence. Although as mentioned in the Introduction, the Sung dynasty from beginning to end was constantly plagued by the problem of foreign invasions, the factor of foreign threat, on the other hand, obliged the Southern Sung regime to build up a solid defence. This was especially noted during Hsiao-tsung's reign, when defence preparations were carefully carried out with the objective of hui-fu being constantly upheld. Hsiao-tsung's foreign policy and his consolidation of the empire's defence during the Ch'ien-tao and Ch'un-hsi eras undoubtedly contributed to the military strength of the Southern Sung, which enabled it to resist Mongol attacks for more than forty years.

In his criticism of Hsiao-tsung's foreign policy, Wang Fu-chih attributes the adoption of the peace policy by both the Sung and Chin states to their lack of ability to fight each other and claims that because of this, they were forced to maintain the status quo. He also laments the military weakness and the complacency of these two states, which he says were the reasons why they fell easily to the Mongols.[51] However, a look at

51. SL, ch.11, pp.210-213.

Southern Sung history shows that the Mongol conquest of South China was by no means easy. While it took the Mongols over two decades to conquer North China from the Jurchen, they were countered with stiff Sung resistance for forty-five years after the fall of Chin. This shows that the maintenance of status quo did not actually lead to complacency, as claimed by Wang Fu-chih. On the other hand, as we have studied in earlier chapters, the establishment of peace in 1165 did not result in the slackening of defence preparations during the Hsiao-tsung era. Furthermore, following the peace settlement concluded by Hsiao-tsung, the tranquility along the Sung-Chin border lasted for the rest of the twelfth century, enabling the state to enjoy economic prosperity and political stability. It also enabled the government to focus its efforts on fortifying the defences of the empire, as illustrated by the various military measures implemented by Hsiao-tsung.

Nevertheless, the relative stability in foreign relations that characterized the last half of the twelfth century was altered to one of international tension since the beginning of the thirteenth century. Hostilities between Sung and Chin flared up once again in 1206-08 with the launching of the northern campaign by Han T'o-chou.[52] The war was eventually doomed to failure and in the peace agreement of 1208, the Sung conceded to an increase in its annual payment to the Chin, a lowering in its status vis-a-vis the Chin, and the payment of a substantial

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52. For an account of the war, see SSPM, ch.83, pp.925-34.

amount as war indemnity. The most humiliating term of the treaty was the deliverance of Han T'o-chou's head to the enemy, considered by some as degrading and an insult to the integrity of the Sung.[53] Thus as a result of Han's inept policy, the Southern Sung suffered a major setback in foreign relations since the time Hsiao-tsung upgraded Sung diplomatic status in the 1165 treaty.[54] The disastrous consequences of Han's blunder also proves the wisdom of Hsiao-tsung and his advisers in maintaining the status quo despite great temptation to launch the campaign of reconquest, especially in the early 1170s.[55] The ability of the Chin to counter-attack the Sung in spite of the many reports concerning its imminent dissolution shows that its military strength was indeed something to be reckoned with.

Apart from the renewal of Sung-Chin hostilities, the intrusion of the Mongols into the international scene since the early thirteenth century also made the situation more complicated for the Sung. The Mongol assault upon the Chin empire since 1211 forced the Jurchen to move southwards, transferring their capital from Peking 北京 to K'ai-feng in 1214. Further pressure from the Mongols led them to attack the Sung in 1217 and

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53. Among those who protested against this humiliating terms was the Minister of War, Ni Ssu倪思, and the Imperial University Instructor, Chen Te-hsiu. See HTC, ch.158, pp.4275-76 and p.4281; see also their respective biography in SS, ch.398, p.12115 and ch.437, p.12957.

54. See Chapter III, pp.129-131.

55. See Chapter IV, pp. 187-89 and Chapter V, pp. 192-93.

fighting continued until 1223. During these years Sung foreign policy under the administration of Shih Mi-yüan remained largely passive and defensive.[56] Even as the Mongol-Jurchen war raged on in the next decade, the Sung still held on firmly to the policy of non-intervention. It was not until 1233 that the Sung modified this policy by agreeing to a joint Mongol-Sung attack upon the Jurchen.[57] Shih's overall non-aggressive approach was very much similar to that of his father, Shih Hao, the major peace protagonist during the early years of Hsiao-tsung's reign.[58] Although there was much criticism against Shih Mi-yüan for his timidity, it should nevertheless be pointed out that by pursuing a policy of non-involvement, he allowed the empire to enjoy sustained political and economic stability in the face of growing international conflict.

However, immediately following the fall of Chin in 1234, the Sung adopted an aggressive posture under Shih Mi-yüan's successor, Cheng Ch'ing-chih 鄭清之. The Sung troops which had helped to defeat the Jurchen earlier were ordered to advance further north to recapture the old capitals of k'ai-feng and Lo-yang 洛陽.[59] This turned out to be another great blunder for

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56. For example, after the Mongols began their assault on the Chin empire in 1211, Shih Mi-yüan went no further than ordering the border officials to fortify their defences. See HTC, ch. 159, p.4305.

57. For an account of the joint Sung-Mongol military action against the Chin, see SSPM, ch.91.

58. See Chapter III, pp.93-103.

59. HTC, ch.167, p.4563; SSPM, ch.92.

not only did the Sung fail to hold the area but its action provoked hostilities from the Mongols. Thus the Sung was plunged into another war that ensued for the next few decades. Nevertheless, during this long period of warfare, the Sung had successfully resisted Mongol invasions by denying them a foothold in South China. Besides the factor of a strong Sung defence, it should be pointed out that the Mongol advance was also hindered by their difficulty in obtaining supplies for their troops and their preoccupation with a large number of domestic problems, particularly during the 1230s and 1240s. Meanwhile, Sung foreign policy alternated between war and peace under the leadership of different chief councillors.[60] As a result of its wavering policy, the Sung failed to prepare itself fully for the inevitable showdown with the Mongols. Neither had it succeeded in concluding an agreement with the Mongols that might have guaranteed peace for some time, similar to former treaties with the Chin. By the late 1250s hostilities along the border began to intensify and in the late 1260s the enemy planned their final onslaught upon Sung. After the fall of Hsiang-yang in 1273, Mongol forces rapidly moved eastwards and it was only a matter of time before the empire collapsed. In analysing Sung foreign relations in the thirteenth century, it can be said that the relatively strong position of

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60. In 1136 Chief Councillor Cheng Ch'ing-chih who had adopted a firm stand against the Mongols was replaced by the moderate Ch'iao Hsing-chien 喬行簡 , who followed a more conciliatory policy. Ch'iao was succeeded by Shih Sung-chih 史嵩之 , who was also anti-war. The anti-pacifists again took over in 1247 with the reinstallation of Cheng Ch'ing-chih.

the Sung in international relations ended with the reign of Hsiao-tsung and was replaced by a generally weak and dependent posture as the dynasty approached its end.

Nevertheless, despite the many weaknesses in its foreign policy, the Southern Sung government did tolerably well in the area of defence. Although the lack of a coherent policy on foreign relations greatly hampered decisive actions that might be advantageous to the Sung position, the importance of defence against foreign invasions was unanimously agreed to by all parties and emphasized upon at all times. The solidity of the Southern Sung defence was indeed crucial to the continued existence of the dynasty after the fall of North China. In this respect, Hsiao-tsung's efforts in consolidating the empire's defence should be duly recognised.

Even under peaceful conditions during the reign of Hsiao-tsung, the government was obliged to maintain an army of 400,000 men.[61] Because of the necessity to be in a state of constant military preparedness, it was extremely difficult to reduce the number of soldiers and impossible to decrease military expenditure, as we have seen in the preceding chapters. The frequency of wars in the thirteenth century and the Mongol invasions towards the end of the dynasty made it necessary to maintain a much larger army. The number of soldiers in late Southern Sung China has been

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61. See Chapter V, p. 198.

estimated to be around one million men.[62] However, in spite of the great number of men in its army, the vastness of the empire and the wide extent of its borders meant that there were still not enough soldiers to cope effectively with border defence.[63] Furthermore, the quality of the troops which had been strictly maintained by Hsiao-tsung formerly also deteriorated after his reign.[64] Yet the emphasis of Hsiao-tsung on the importance of the army was closely adhered to by his successors. Also, even though no outstanding generals emerged during Hsiao-tsung's time, several capable military leaders did appear during the thirteenth century. Among them were Meng Kung 孟珙 and Yü Chieh 余玠, who had both contributed greatly to the defence of late Southern Sung China.[65] Thus in a way it can be said that Hsiao-tsung's

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62. See Chia Ssu-tao's memorial in SS, ch.194, ping-chih 兵志 7, p.4822.

63. The insufficiency in the number of Southern Sung soldiers had been pointed out by the Chin-shih candidate, Wen T'ien-hsiang 文天祥 in 1256: "Since the building of walls in Tung-hai 東海 and the transfer of the Huai troops to guard the coastal area, there were not enough soldiers in the Huai region.... After sending soldiers from Ching 荊 to fortify the Hsiang 襄 region, there were not enough soldiers in the Ching-hu 荊湖 region...." See Wen T'ien-hsiang, Wen-shan ch'üan-chi 文山全集 (SPTK ed.), ch.3, pp.55-56. For a discussion on this issue, see also Chang Yin-lin, op.cit., pp.110-111.

64. The lack of discipline in the army and the deterioration in morale among the troops had been vividly described by Chen Te-hsiu in a memorial dated 1214. See Chen Te-hsiu, op.cit., ch.3, p.91.

65. For the career of Meng Kung, see his tomb inscription in Liu k'e-chuang, Hou-ts'un hsien-sheng ta-ch'üan chi, ch.143, pp.1252-58. For a scholarly study on Yü Chieh, see Yao Ts'ung-wu 姚從吾, "Yü Chieh P'ing-chuan 余玠評傳", SSYCC, Vol.4 (1969), pp.95-158. See also their respective biography in SS, ch.412, pp.12369-80 and ch.416, pp.12468-73.

life-long search for military personnel had been posthumously realized. His favourable treatment of military personnel and lack of prejudice against them, in contrast to the general dynastic tradition of civilian supremacy over the military, undoubtedly helped to promote the military cause in a civilian-dominated society.

As related in Chapter IV, the reign of Hsiao-tsung saw the fortification of defences in strategic locations in the Yang-tzu, Huai, Hsiang-yang and Ssu-ch'uan regions. Although the Sung was restricted by treaty regulations to have no active defence policy in the Huai region,[66] it had however been Hsiao-tsung's policy to strengthen the defence of both the Yang-tzu and Huai regions, and to fortify both the inner or core area as well as the outlying territories of the empire. While Hsiao-tsung's active defence policy led to criticism by certain officials, especially the more cautious and timid among them, his efforts in defence preparations were nevertheless greatly appreciated by posterity, and advocates of a strong Huai defence in succeeding generations were also inspired by his example.[67] It is significant that in its final campaign to conquer South China, the Mongol army moved eastward from Ssu-ch'uan and Hsiang-yang

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66. Chen Te-hsiu mentioned that after the establishment of peace with the Jurchen (in 1142), the treaty restricted the Sung from pursuing an active defence of the Huai region. See Chen Te-hsiu, op.cit., ch.3, p.92.

67. Ibid.

to the core region rather than southward from the Huai to the Yang-tzu, which testifies the military strength of the Huai and Yang-tzu areas. Sung resilience was also shown by the gallant defence put up by Hsiang-yang, which resisted Mongol invasions on several occasions and was able to survive the final Mongol siege for more than five years.

Equally remarkable was the strong defence in Ssu-ch'uan. As illustrated in Chapter IV, the consolidation of defence in Ssu-ch'uan and the north-western borders had been largely accomplished during Hsiao-tsung's reign, particularly through the efforts of Yü Yün-wen. Successive emperors continued to place great importance on the defence of Ssu-ch'uan. It is worth mentioning that in the 1240s the general Yü Chieh played a decisive role in defending Ssu-ch'uan, especially by the building of strong forts in the strategically important mountain ranges.[68] Because of its strong fortifications, the Mongols faced great difficulties in their attempts to conquer Ssu-ch'uan, and one of their rulers even died in battle there in 1259. This event was indeed crucial to the fate of the late Southern Sung as it helped to prolong the life of the dynasty for another twenty years.[69] While the Mongol defeat in this battle should be largely attributed to the wall-

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68. HTC, ch.171, pp.4650-51.

69. The Mongol ruler who died in Ssu-ch'uan in 1259 was Mongke. The Mongol defeat has been attributed to the efforts of Yü Chieh in fortifying Ssu-ch'uan earlier. See Yao Ts'ung-wu, "Sung Yü Chieh she-fang shan-ch'eng tui Meng-ku ju-ch'in ti ta-chi 宋余玠設防山城對蒙古入侵的打擊," SSYCC, Vol.1, pp.215-226.

building efforts of Yü Chieh, the solidity of the Ssu-ch'uan defence could ultimately be traced back to the military preparations under Hsiao-tsung's reign.

It has been seen in earlier chapters that an important defence measure implemented by Hsiao-tsung was the establishment of military colonies or t'un-t'ien. As mentioned in Chapter V, there was an intensification in the implementation of t'un-t'ien projects in the Hsiang-yang and Huai areas towards the last years of Hsiao-tsung's reign. The importance of military colonies as an effective means of defending the empire was increasingly realized during times of war in the thirteenth century. The government had at different times instructed the local administrators to implement the t'un-t'ien scheme in various places, especially in strategically important areas. For example, in 1227 the Prefectural Vice-Administrator of Hsiang-yang, Shih Sung-chih 史嵩之, successfully reorganised the military colonies in this area by transforming the formerly unprofitable farms into a remunerative undertaking. This resulted in his concurrent appointment as Subprefect and Military Consultant for Tsao-yang 棗陽, another strategically vital area east of Hsiang-yang. There also Shih's implementation of t'un-t'ien proved to be effective.[70] The court's emphasis on military colonies as a defence measure is clearly seen by the proclamation of an imperial order in 12th/1240 whereby all Defence Commissioners

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70. Biography of Shih Sung-chih, SS, ch.414, p.12423; annals of Ning-tsung, SS, ch.41, p.792.

(chih-chih shih 制置使) were to be given concurrent assignments as Commissioners of Military Colonies (t'un-t'ien shih 屯田使) in their respective territories.[71] Subsequently, as Defence Commssioner of Ssu-ch'uan, Meng Kung and Yü Chieh successively took charge of the management of t'un-t'ien in this region. Their effective administration of the military farms undoubtedly contributed further to the strong defence of Ssu-ch'uan. The success of the t'un-t'ien scheme was also reported in the Yang-tzu region in 1243.[72]

Besides the successful implementation of military colonies, the effectiveness of the militia was also a major factor that contributed to the strength of Southern Sung defence. As related in Chapters IV and V, the reign of Hsiao-tsung was noted for its efforts in the reorganisation and training of militia forces. Their importance was clearly seen during times of war, as testified by the comments of Li-tsung in 1229 that the majority of the Sung success in battles should be attributed to the militia.[73] Indeed, the training of militia and the management of t'un-t'ien were looked upon as the urgent tasks of the day by Li-tsung and his court. The militia continued to grow in importance towards the last years of the dynasty. It is interesting to note that of the half-million soldiers who

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71. HTC, ch.170, p.4629.

72. HTC, ch.171, p.4651.

73. HTC, ch.164, p.4478.

accompanied the fugitive court in 1276, 170,000 men belonged to the regular troops while 300,000 men derived from the militia.[74] This is a clear indication of the crucial role played by the militia in the defence of the late Southern Sung empire.

Final Remarks

From the preceding sections in the chapter, we can see clearly how various political, socio-economic and military factors interacted to keep the Southern Sung empire going until its final days. As emphasized earlier, the dynasty had demonstrated an astonishing power of survival in a tumultuous age. In the final analysis, this amazing stability amid increasing strain and stress can be attributed to the maintenance of a lasting political, socio-economic order and a durable defence system which were all effectively consolidated during the reign of Hsiao-tsung. Externally, stabilization of the northern frontier took place since the early years of Hsiao-tsung's reign with the borders being consolidated from the Huai River westward to northern Ssu-ch'uan. Internally, political consolidation was thoroughly achieved by Hsiao-tsung through absolutism and centralization, while his financial and agricultural policies contributed to the socio-economic well-being of the populace and added to the splendours of his regime.

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74. HTC, ch.183, p.4995.

Admittedly Hsiao-tsung had various faults such as being over-indulgent at times in personnel management, manipulative in dealing with his ministers and employing accommodative tactics in administration, but he managed to construct a dynasty of long duration. He not only established an age of peace and order during his twenty-seven years on the throne but he also left behind a politically stable, economically viable and militarily solid empire that lasted until the Mongol onslaught. As illustrated earlier, Hsiao-tsung's efforts in consolidation had far-reaching impact upon the Southern Sung dynasty as these helped to hold the empire firmly together in the ensuing nine decades. Because of the lasting contributions made by this capable, assertive and efficient emperor, Hsiao-tsung truly deserved to be called the "Consolidator of Southern Sung China".

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